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THE CRISIS IN BERLIN

THE situation in Berlin grows steadily more dangerous. Every day provides innumerable occasions for incidents, any one of which could lead to actual shooting. The Russians, as their attitude to the joint enquiry into the airplane crash shows clearly enough, are not merely behaving unco-operatively; they are systematically destroying the basis of agreement on which the presence of the Western Allies in Berlin has depended since 1945. They believe, with a good deal of justification, that, without some Four-Power co-operation, the Western position in Berlin would soon become untenable; and they are deliberately "turning on the heat" with the object of forcing us either to withdraw or to stay on new terms dictated by them. Either result would give them a satisfying victory.

As a British correspondent in Berlin points out on another page, the Russians are in a much stronger position than many people in this country realise. While we are being compelled by the desperate conditions in Bizonia to go ahead with plans for German self-government, they can comfortably afford to wait and, by leaving us to take the first step, put us in the wrong with the Germans. Quadripartite rule has not prevented them from organising their Zone as they wish: it has prevented us. Their plan, therefore, is to work up the tension in Berlin and to wait until the British and Americans make the first unilateral move, which will almost certainly be the reform of the currency. At some point they will elect to say that the Potsdam Agreement has been torn up by the Western Powers; that Britain and America are dividing Germany; and that by so doing we have removed any justification for our remaining in Berlin.

We are indeed faced with a most unpleasant dilemma. If we go ahead in Western Germany, we enable the Russians ultimately to make Berlin the seat of their "real" German Government. But if we postpone action on account of the position in Berlin, we are equally playing into Russian hands.

There is little doubt what the decision will be. Whatever the risks, we have got to carry through the currency reform and set up a German Government at Frankfurt. On that point we cannot compromise. But simultaneously we can seek to ensure that Four-Power control of the city of Berlin will continue, even if this means accepting certain Russian conditions which we do not like. To strengthen our position, we must at once transfer to Western Germany all the British and American staff in Berlin who are concerned with German, as distinct from Berlin, affairs, and send home all the women and children. We shall only be in a fit condition to bargain with the Russians about Berlin when we have reduced the staff there to the number suitable for what will virtually be siege conditions.

Italy Goes to the Polls

The people of Italy this week-end are faced with a choice between promises, some of which may be incapable of fulfilment, and threats, of which one at least can be carried out. To the millions of industrial workers thrown out of employment by Signor Einaudi's deflation and to the peasant victims of Italy's unreformed latifundist system, the Popular Front is promising work, bread and land; but, without American aid, would bread be forthcoming, and can full employment be restored without the imports of U.S. coal and steel which—albeit in severely scaled down volume—are to be provided under E.R.P.? From the Christian Democrats Italian voters receive no promises of reform, not even of the limited agrarian and industrial reforms contained in Signor de Gasperi's 1946 election programme but subsequently honoured only in the breach. What electors have been told by the Catholic Right, reinforced by the powerful propaganda machine of the Vatican, is that, if they vote for the Left, they can expect neither material nor spiritual salvation—neither dollars from Congress nor sacraments from the altar.

The resultant of these contending forces—hunger for land and wages balanced against fear of an American boycott, or even intervention leading to war—is difficult to forecast. Most observers seem to consider that, in the South, the Communist appeal to the landless peasantry is strong, though Papal threats of excommunication may make some impression, especially on women electors. In the industrial North, where the importance of American coal and raw materials is more keenly appreciated and the Iron Curtain frontier with Yugoslavia is closer at hand, opposition to the Christian Democrats has been leading, it appears, to the strengthening of the Socialist rather than the Communist forces. To what extent this trend will favour the Nenni group in the Popular Front or the independent fraction under Saragat is anybody's guess.

All the indications seem to be that there is no prospect of the Popular Front securing an absolute majority. The question is what will happen if, as seems possible, the Communists and Nenni Socialists combined secure something like 35-40 per cent. of the poll? With Czechoslovakian experience fresh in their minds, the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Office will clearly be most averse to consenting to a National Front coalition embracing the Communists as well as the other two main Parties; and there is no longer any pretence that Italy can expect immunity from foreign intervention. We should expect, therefore, that, if the result of the election leaves the Centre and Right (excluding the Fascist fringe) without an adequate majority in the Assembly, great pressure from abroad will be brought to bear on the Nenni group of Socialists to secede from the Popular Front and join with the Saragat Socialists and such "middle" groups as that led by Signor Parri in giving general support to a Right-Centre administration. In that event the pattern of France would be woven in Italy.

Revolt in Bogota

Mr. Secretary Marshall has found no difficulty in endorsing the diagnosis of the Colombian President, Dr. Ospina Perez, that the revolt in Bogota was organised by Communists. If the delegates to the interrupted Pan-American Conference accept the view that Colombia has been the victim of a pro-Russian fifth column in the Western Hemisphere, the convenient effect may be to consolidate the ties between the U.S. and

most of the American Republics on an anti-Communist basis. But was the rising in fact organised or inspired by Communists in the European sense? Its immediate cause appears to have been the assassination of Jorge Gaitan, leader of the Liberal Party, which enjoyed power in Colombia from 1930 to 1946. Gaitan, born of humble "mestizo" parentage, was a self-made lawyer who reached the first milestone in his political career when he was elected Mayor of Bogota. In 1946 he ran as unofficial candidate for the presidency against the official Liberal candidate, Dr. Turbay, thus splitting the Liberal vote and letting in the Conservative candidate, Dr. Perez—tool of the reactionary Colombian Church and the landowners. Credited generally with dictatorial ambitions, Gaitan copied the tactics of Peron, exploiting the resentment of the mestizos against unreformed landlordism and the slow working of the democratic State. A pure demagogue, he used the slogans of pseudo-Trotskyist Socialism to whip up passion and violence; and his speeches during the 1946 campaign led to numerous riots. Who shot him is not known. The bullet may have been fired by a member of the numerically negligible Communist Party, in whose eyes Gaitan, like Peron, was a crypto-Fascist; but the assassin seems just as likely to have been an agent of wealthy landlords alarmed at the influence exercised by Gaitan's demagogy over the discontented "have-nots."

French Prices and Politics

The substantial success gained by the Communists in this week's municipal election at Epernay can be taken as a reflection of increasing popular scepticism in France as to the efficacy of M. René Mayer's efforts to hold down prices. The cuts recently announced in the official prices of domestic coal, electricity, woollen goods and workers' shoes should do a little, if they are realised in practice, to stem the still upward trend of living costs; but, on a conservative estimate, the French price level is at least 20 per cent. higher than it was when the wage increases demanded by the C.G.T. were granted in December. M. Mayer has so far failed to bring about any reduction in the price of gold in the free market; farmers, alarmed by their experience when 5,000-franc notes were called in, are disinclined either to exchange their hoards of gold for paper currency or to deliver produce freely in the legal markets. There are favourable factors in the situation: the crop outlook is good, and coal supplies are now adequate. Everything turns on the ability of the Government to raise the purchasing power of wages with the aid of E.R.P. imports. Unless M. Mayer gains, and gains rapidly, much more ground than he has yet won in the battle of prices, the chances of avoiding another politically critical clash on the issue of wages are slender.

Civil War in Palestine

With the British evacuation now well under way, the war in Palestine enters a new stage. It is now almost certain that, despite the calling of the Special Assembly, nothing will be done to maintain law and order, even in Jerusalem, after May 15. The American Government, while it talks vaguely of a truce, seems to have accepted the view of the War Office that the Jews and Arabs must be permitted to fight it out and that the job of the Great Powers will be limited to "isolating the conflict"—that is to non-intervention on the Spanish model. The knowledge of this cynical decision partly accounts for the increased barbarity of the fighting. Terror is the only weapon the Stern gang understands, and they seek to justify it by the terrible mutilation of Jewish bodies committed by Arab guerrillas, photographs of which have appeared in the American but not in the British press. The Arabs are divided into three rival Armies. First there is King Abdulla's Arab Legion which is waiting the order to march in and to annex adjacent areas for Transjordan. Secondly, there is the Mufti who, with his German-trained guerrilla leaders, dominates the Southern hills. Thirdly, there is the Arab League's Army of Liberation which has now taken up positions round Nablus. This Army differs from the Mufti's gangs both in its far better discipline and equipment and in the fact that its soldiers, conveniently on leave from the Syrian and Iraqui armies, receive regular pay and so have no need to live off the land. The Haganah is much better equipped than the Mufti's men but lacks the artillery of the Army of Liberation and the British equipment and staff officers of the Arab Legion. If the Jews are not to suffer terrible reverses, they will soon have to give up prestige battles for isolated settlements and concentrate on holding compact and defensible areas. Provided it accepts this strategy, the new Jewish Government, with a hundred thousand reinforcements from the Displaced Persons camps, can expect to hold out until open strife between the three Arab Armies gives it a chance to make a settlement.

E.R.P. and the Sterling Area

The problems of working out a practical system of administering the European Recovery programme have kept Washington so busy that the international problems have been forced into the background. But there can be little doubt that some sort of a clash is bound to arise between Britain and America over the sterling area. At present the British Treasury rations "hard currency" to our wartime creditors such as India and Egypt; now that the United States is going to inject a large amount of dollars into our system, the question arises as to who controls their ultimate use. American trade experts do not object to seeing Britain play its traditional role as a "spreader of the muck," i.e., increasing world-wide trade with the help of dollars; but the Defence Department planners, who regard E.R.P. purely as a holding operation which will provide a sound base for American action in a "cold" or "hot" war in Europe, think it wasteful if dollars are used by Britain to finance either capital investment in, or unrequited exports to non-European countries within the sterling area. This policy split in Washington is matched in London, where the Treasury would not object to pressure being brought to bear on our wartime creditors to scale down their demands for hard currency. The political Departments are, however, extremely anxious to avoid having British influence—e.g., in the Middle East—weakened by American interference. Meanwhile the French see an admirable opportunity to use American pressure to force the British to concentrate their unrequited exports in Europe. The squabble underlines the need to create a powerful Sixteen Nations' organisation in Paris which will settle internal European differences. It is disturbing to find that the British Government apparently intends to establish an independent purchasing commission in the U.S.A.

Doctors' Second Thoughts

With time the essence of the contract, the Minister of Health and the B.M.A. have reopened discussions on the National Health Service. Both sides are acutely aware that only three months now remain before the Service comes into operation on July 5. The Minister has been surprisingly conciliatory. Protesting "I will ne'er consent," he has consented to an Amending Bill which makes any alteration of the ratio of basic salary to capitation fee subject to the approval of the House instead of being at the discretion of the Minister; he has appointed his legal committee to clarify the relations of partners under the Act; and he has asked doctors to accept the £300 a year basic for a trial period of three years—on the understanding that doctors, once they are established, will have a right to contract out of the salary if they prefer capitation fees, but that all beginners will have the benefits of the assured income. These concessions meet the suggestions of the Royal College of Physicians, and ought to reassure those doctors who, rightly or wrongly, distrust a fully salaried service.

Films: "Sell-out" or Salvation?

Despite the new Films Act, under which it is reasonable to suppose that Mr. Wilson will fix a high quota for British films, and despite the temporary shortage of American films, over ten per cent. of British studio facilities are idle and native British film production is suffering from a general slow-down. It is understandable that Mr. Rank should not be stepping up his output. The agreement with Hollywood will provide a fresh flow of U.S. films, from the companies with which he is already in contact, for his cinemas, and his only need is to sponsor sufficient films in Britain to meet his quota. A.B.C. are similarly placed—with the addition that Warner Bros., by extending their operation here, can help to meet the A.B.C. quota and at the same time collect dollars for any films made in England and subsequently exported to America. Neither organisation is specially interested in stimulating the genuine independent producer, who must increase his activities if the British film industry is to amount to anything at all. Yet, if the opportunity is not taken now to help him, the chance will pass away and Hollywood's grip on the British film industry will be even firmer, as a result of the new agreement, than it was before the war. Mr. Wilson was at pains to point out to the Association of Ciné Technicians on Sunday that the agreement provided that unremitted sterling earned in the U.K. by Hollywood could not be used in unfair competition with the British industry. But it would obviously be impracticable to maintain indefinitely that the acquisition by American companies of British studios that remain empty would be unfair, particularly as film production is one of the permitted uses for unremitted sterling. The immediate necessity is to get the empty studios taken over by British film producers and to enable them to be operated. Film finance is a tricky business, and the powerful position of the distributor *vis-a-vis* the producer in the past has nearly always meant that the producer has been lucky to break even, let alone make a profit. Mr. Wilson, if he fixes the quota sufficiently high, can redress that balance, provided that he also acts quickly in making finance available for production.

The Local Elections

Labour did rather badly in the district council elections last week, though not nearly so badly as in the borough council elections last November. The losses are the outcome, partly, of a spontaneous change-over by the fringe voters, but probably a good deal more of the great increase in the Conservative Head Office's activity in local affairs. Many more contests are being fought on party lines, both by Labour and by the Conservatives; and the replacement of actually conservative Independents by official Conservatives goes on apace. The Liberals are still a waning force, and the Communists nearly negligible. It has become, in most areas except a diminishing number of market towns and rural areas, openly a matter of Conservatives *versus* Socialists. For this struggle the Conservatives are now very much better equipped than ever before, whereas the Labour Party is suffering from a reaction after its great advance in 1945. Last year, though its affiliated Trade Union membership rose sharply as a result of the repeal of the Trade Unions Act, its individual membership, which reflects the condition of the local Labour Parties, actually decreased. It is always unsafe to draw conclusions from local elections about national politics; but perhaps it is getting less unsafe as they come to be fought more on party lines and with the active participation of the national party machines. At all costs, Transport House had best "watch out."

Death Penalty Goes

Up till the last minute the promoters of the new Clause in the Criminal Justice Bill, abolishing the death penalty for a trial period of five years, did not dare to hope they would be successful. Government resistance was strong and backed by powerful Tory support. Previously it had been understood that the "free" vote was to allow Ministers to vote according to their conscience. Later, it became clear that the most they were reluctantly permitted was abstention. That the Clause passed in such circumstances was more than a victory for the opponents of capital punishment; it was a victory for living democracy. As in the famous Prayer Book debates, the House rejected any attempts at interference with its conscience. In the end, three Ministers in the Cabinet, and nine outside it, abstained; and the Government Lobby contained not one of the four Law Officers of the Crown. It was a demonstration that, despite a darkening world, the British House of Commons is still able to take sane and civilising steps, and to resist hysteria. The triumph was the more valuable because it was not easily won.

PARLIAMENT: Gift Horse

Wednesday

Among the City Gents who hunt on Saturdays, they'd been saying for some time that the Labour Cads had shot their fox. What was their surprise when the late Chancellor came snooping around their coops, his bark as fierce as ever. From his chosen place on the third bench, Dalton made a speech, during the Budget Debate, of front-bench weight and length in order to prove, first, that he wasn't dead, and second, that the Budget was almost as good as if he had written it himself.

This intervention diverted the Tories from a tepid-to-cool welcome to Cripps' proposals, and roused in them a mixture of rancour and alarm. They began to debate a ghostly next year's Budget, which already seemed to gibber at them with the horrors of capital levy and capital direction, conjured up by the late Chancellor. The general Tory argument went something like this. "Cripps, of course, is all right. Or he would be all right if it weren't for the Socialists who keep prodding him to the Left. They've made him bring in the Special Contribution, and we believe he means it to be once-for-all. But what if that Dalton fellow ever got back to power?"

The main attack on Dalton came from Birch. After some gibes at the cheap money policy—which failed because of the rush from Government stocks to speculative industrials—he opposed the present rate of food subsidies, shuddered away from a capital levy and concluded from this that a patriot had no choice but to say: "Whatever it costs me in suffering, I will see my country lives within its means." Hinchingbrooke had already pointed out the difficult decision of many in making up their minds whether to stay in Britain or to leave for what he called "free countries." In his view, the capital levy would clinch it.

The Debate did not begin to justify the five days allotted to it. At times it seemed that only those were listeners who themselves intended to speak. There were the usual careful reviews of fiscal policy by specialists like George Benson, Donald Bruce, Sir Stanley Holmes and Alex Speerman. Harris, the conqueror of Harold Nicolson, in a very competent maiden speech, championed the self-made man. From the Government side Williams, the new Socialist for Wigan, championed the miner, with commendable brevity and in a pleasant style.

The most memorable features of the Debate were the success of Cripps' young men—Jay, Wilson and Gaitskell are all much more than competent at the dispatch box—and the speeches of Eccles and Boothby. Eccles, in what is now becoming a standard Conservative line, prophesied gloom and destruction unless we returned to solvency by the simple device of cutting expenditure by £600 millions. Boothby was at the top of his form, outlining his philosophy of Western Union. But by and large it was a very flat affair; and the Chancellor, finding little to reply to, wound it up with a concession on children's non-utility clothes.

PHINEAS INC.

THE STANDARD RATION

By the abolition of the basic petrol ration the Government succeeded in its intention to save dollars. A saving at the rate of 50 million dollars—even at the cost of grave individual inconvenience and a good deal of injustice—is no small contribution towards bridging the dollar gap. By effectively eliminating the black market, the ban on basic confounded those critics (including ourselves) who doubted whether it would produce worth-while economies. Arguments about the loss of internal revenue from oil duty and licences in pounds, shillings and pence mean nothing in comparison with the reduction in dollar spending. But, as well as saving dollars, the Government have given themselves, and the country, the opportunity of achieving a secondary, but no less important objective—the restoration of moral standards.

During the war motorists co-operated, and by and large did not abuse their ration. After the war petrol became less a national concern and more a political issue. Speeches from the Opposition were aimed at showing that the continuance of rationing was unnecessary and due to Governmental mismanagement. Even when the country grew "dollar conscious" efforts were made to demonstrate that petrol had little or nothing to do with dollars, and that the Government's cheeseparing was the result of class bias and an overwhelming love of austerity for its own sake. The natural response to this propaganda, and most motorists were amenable to it, was a general easing of the conscience. Petrol regulations were looked on as products of a tiresome Party Government, bearing small relation to the national necessity. To evade them was not unpatriotic; it was sensible, provided that it could be done without risk. The permission of "free" motoring combined with a basic ration, and the existence of a multitude of garages with ample supplies of black market petrol, made the danger of detection negligible. So far had disrespect of the law gone by the summer of 1947 that it is estimated that at least 10 per cent. of all the petrol used in private motor cars in 1947 was obtained illegally; and the demand for such petrol was steadily increasing. As the amount of petrol used last year fell short of the coupons issued by 118 million gallons (or three times the quantity of the new standard ration) it is clear that there was a wide latitude for the further development of the black market which would certainly have taken place.

The Russell Vick Report shows that, far from being wrong in announcing the abolition of basic in last September, the Government can be legitimately criticised for their leniency for allowing basic petrol to be used until December 1st. Not until the old system had been discarded for an appreciable period was it possible to gauge with any accuracy the sources and extent of the black market or to suggest remedies.

The scheme now devised has the admirable effect of giving every motorist a vested interest in the elimination of the black market instead of in its extension. As anticipated, the chief supplier of the black market has been established as the lorry driver whose allowance has previously been over-generous. The introduction of petrol colouring by an irremovable dye—a proposal made by Mr. R. G. Paget, M.P., last October, and then rejected by the Government—is the first step towards stopping this leakage. The second is the ingenious series of penalties designed to make the punishment fit the crime. The third is the warning that, if the black market is not stamped out, even the new standard ration will be withdrawn. The test to be applied is a simple one: if the consumption of petrol rises above its present level, it will mean that the black market still operates.

Although the new ration is a small one, the Government would have been inconsistent if they had allowed any increase in the imports of petrol. The original withdrawal of basic was one of the main factors in bringing home to the country the seriousness of our position. To have cancelled out any of the dollar savings which have resulted would have led to the belief that the situation was not so serious after all. To make the black market (with fresh cuts in existing allowances) disgorge the petrol for the new ration is the right policy. On the other hand, as one of the major objects of the new arrangement is to re-create honesty, the position which has now arisen with regard to supplementary allowances is unfortunate. To reward the driver who has deliberately overestimated his requirements in supplementary petrol (and got away with it) is to infuriate the conscientious applicant and to encourage him to attempt the same course.

It can only be justified on the assumption that most holders of "E" and "S" coupons have more than they strictly need for their unavoidable requirements, and that in any case they derive considerable personal convenience from present use of their cars. That this is the true situation is the opinion both of the Government and of the experts of the motoring organisations. In those circumstances it was reasonable to distribute the petrol to be saved among the 600,000 who have put their cars away rather than to withhold it from them on the grounds that perhaps twenty per cent. of those with supplementary allowances would gain nothing. Nevertheless, as soon as any further relaxation becomes possible, the Government must see that the undoubtedly genuine sense of injustice felt by some holders of "E" and "S" coupons is removed by extending the standard ration to them.

AS IT LOOKS IN BERLIN

(*From a British Correspondent.*)

The ring round Berlin is tightening, after three weeks of a highly intensified war of nerves. The Soviet technique is now as familiar as Hitler's used to be. So faithfully is it being applied that once again one waits for the traditional "week-end surprise," and is rarely disappointed. So far all Russian moves, on their face, appear merely as "minor irritants," from the restrictions on rail travel to the closing of the Allied aid stations along the *Autobahn* and the expulsion of the British signal teams, and that is precisely what makes them so irritating. Every one of them is in itself a legal act, or can be construed as one, in which the Russians are within their legitimate rights, yet their sum total is the progressive strangulation of the city. At the moment they still have not much more than a nuisance value, but their potential strategical value cannot be overlooked.

The suspension of Allied rail travel makes it impossible for the Western Allies to ship to the West any Germans to whose departure the Russians would object, but who would be in acute or even mortal danger if left behind after an enforced exodus of the Allies from the city. It is useless, it is felt here, for the Allies to say that they will stand by the Germans who support them here when it is already clear that in the hour of crisis they will not be able to do a thing for them. Similarly the outwardly comparatively harmless request to withdraw British signals teams enables the Russians to cut Allied communications at wish, on the excuse of a technical breakdown "which will take some time to repair." What would break down first and immediately in such an event would be the Western publicity machine, which is such a thorn in the Russian side and a very important prop for German morale in Berlin. The Russians can now cause this to collapse by throwing a couple of switches.

The Gatow air disaster is now genuinely believed to be a most unfortunate accident caused by negligence possibly on both sides, but still no more than an accident; yet it may have far-reaching consequences on Berlin's air communications with the West. The British are taking the sensible attitude that this is a case which is still *sub judice* and must not be prejudged, but they are finding little sympathy from either Americans or Germans in this attitude, and the Russians have already prejudged it by stating that the British, and they alone, are responsible and that "Soviet conduct was entirely correct." Meantime as an indication to what length of petty interference the Russians will go on occasion in Berlin itself, the only factory producing theatre and cinema tickets in Berlin is in the Soviet sector. It has been forbidden to supply tickets to theatres and cinemas in the three other sectors. Tickets will now have to be brought from the West.

As a counterblast and emphatic demonstration of our determination to stay in Berlin, we announced last night that we would immediately reactivate Berlin's second and largest power plant, situated in the British sector, which was partly destroyed and thereafter cleaned out by the Russians. With the Control Council completely paralysed and the Kommandantura well on the way toward paralysis, this measure, which was objected to by the Russians already a year ago, may now go through, but it may take a year or more before it can effectively prevent the Russians, who are in charge of the other power station, from throwing the Western sectors into pitch darkness.

Where are we going to be in a year from now in Berlin? It must be handed to the Russians that they are playing this poker game with consummate skill. In the present atmosphere of suspense and irritation they are displaying complete outward calm, which is all the more remarkable as it is entirely artificial, while the Western Allies are unable to suppress signs of growing nervousness, which are all the more unsuited to the game, as they are thoroughly sincere and genuine. After each move the Russians immediately relegate the incident to an insignificant place on the inside pages of their newspapers and stolidly maintain that in fact nothing has happened which could justify Western nervousness, and that, after tidying up yet another messy corner of inter-Allied relations, the situation is now more normal than ever, and everything could be functioning better than before but for the evil designs and hostile intentions of the Western Powers.

British and American representatives here, on their part, refuse to be had for mugs, and are convinced that they are faced with merely the mechanical symptoms of a political tangle which is still only in its budding stage waiting to blossom out into full and furious flower. When this happens the question of the fate of Berlin will arise overnight in its full magnitude and complexity, and it will then have to be answered swiftly and in no uncertain manner. The Western Powers know that it is already no longer in their power to do so without shooting, and in this situation trigger-happy American guards posted in front of vital buildings may become an acute menace.

Mr. Crossman's report from Frankfurt last week was widely quoted in the Berlin press, but his recommendations and conclusions could hardly find the sympathy of hard-pressed and admirably calm and composed Berliners "who have deserved well of us." Though he is, of course, right in arguing for the establishment of a German Government in Frankfurt, he is wrong if he believes that our policy should be to *forestall* the Russians. It is true that this step is necessary for the sake of Bizonia, and therefore cannot be long postponed, but it is certainly correct to say that the Russians are only waiting for the West to take it in order to follow suit, and that they are doing everything they can to manœuvre the West into a position where it has no alternative but to set up its own Government. The Soviet-sponsored Berlin press was quick to see this, and they are now saying it, and for once truthfully and with genuine conviction. The truth is that the Soviet Zone, being run on authoritarian lines and firmly under the control of its occupying Power, is in no hurry, and can wait. "The West" cannot. Whether the Soviet Zone gets its own Government to-morrow or in two years time makes no difference to its material situation.

For the West the difference is vital. What is vital for the Russians is that they are not burdened with the onus of having "split Germany." This would cost them the last few sympathies they may still enjoy with the Germans under their control, and it would place their Communists in a most embarrassing position. To this must be added the fact that Frankfurt as a German capital, however "temporary," is a proposition which looks reasonable enough to the British and American authorities, but altogether unreasonable to responsible Germans, and it would probably very swiftly alienate the Eastern Zone, including Berlin, from all Western plans and conceptions. It will be surprising to see how many Germans will then accuse the Western Powers and Western Germans of "treason." This German reaction is almost inevitable, and it would make the prospect of "winning back" the "lost East" from Frankfurt a truly laughable fancy. Yet the West may not have an alternative, and Berliners realise this dilemma and appreciate it. In this mood they are prepared to wait for further week-end "surprises" in the hope that "something may turn up" which will show a way out. Berliners to-day are the greatest optimists in Europe with the least grounds for optimism, and in this paradoxial situation they may yet win through.

Berlin, April 13.

LOCAL AFFAIRS

FIVE men, headed by Sir Malcolm Trustram Eve, have taken the bit between their teeth and bolted a very long way beyond their instructions. When the Local Government Boundary Commission was set up rather more than two years ago, everyone knew that one of the purposes in view was to shunt an awkward political issue on to a siding, or at any rate a branch line. There is hardly anyone interested in the subject who does not hold that the local government system needs thorough reconstruction; but the would-be reconstructors speak with many different voices, and their divisions of opinion do not at all follow party lines. Consequently no Government which attempts to tackle the problem can expect to find its party united in support of any scheme; and, as the critics among its political opponents will be much more vocal than the supporters, it must expect both a rough passage for its Bill and an entire lack of gratitude when and if the Bill becomes law. Add to this the lack of any general public interest in local government structure, as distinct from the doings of particular local authorities on the spot, and the reasons for the reluctance of Governments to face up to the needs of reorganisation need no more explaining.

The idea with which the present Commission was set up was that, if it were given limited powers to readjust boundaries, especially in connection with the redevelopment of blitzed cities, it might be possible to put off indefinitely the major job of adapting the local government structure. This, however, is the very notion to which the Commissioners, after two years' work, refuse to become parties unless the alternative of more thorough reorganisation is definitely ruled out. They have come to the conclusion—which is no surprise to anyone who knows the facts—that it is foolish and unrealistic to consider local boundaries apart from functions, and that the changes needed depend on a redistribution of functions even more fundamentally than on boundaries as such.

It would indeed be very strange if the local government structure did not need reorganisation. In general, it has been hardly touched since the key Acts of 1888 and 1894; and the earlier of these Acts was so knocked about in Parliament as to turn it into something entirely different from what it had been intended to be. That Act cut off the "County Boroughs" from the rest of the county areas and made them into wholly independent "one-tier" local authorities, with councils responsible for the entire range of local services within their areas, except poor law and education—which were subsequently added into them. This privilege, confined in the original Bill to a small number of the largest cities, was extended in the final form of the Act to a large number of middle-sized towns, with the result of leaving many counties mere residues. Since then, the further growth of these towns, with consequent demands for extensions of their municipal frontiers, has led to continual disputes between them and the county councils, to which the concession of the claim has meant a loss of valuable rating territory needed for the financing of services in the more sparsely populated country districts. The increase in scope, standards and cost of locally administered services has continually aggravated the problem; and many reformers long ago reached the conclusion that matters could be rectified only by putting the County Boroughs, or most of them, at any rate for certain purposes, back into the Administrative Counties.

This is one of the things the Boundary Commission now wishes to see done. It raises, however, violent opposition from most of the County Borough enthusiasts, who argue that their form of "single-tier" local government has shown itself both the most efficient and the most democratic form, and are strongly hostile to any sharing of powers with the counties, except voluntarily through Joint Boards or Joint Committees for particular purposes, such as water supply, or hospitals, or town and country planning. The Boundary Commission does not propose to inflict this "degradation" on all the County Boroughs. In England it proposes to turn 17 of the biggest into separate counties, still under "one-tier" government; and in addition it proposes to make new counties based on Greater Manchester and on Merseyside, with smaller authorities inside them on a "two-tier" system. Greater London, having been excluded from the Commission's terms of reference, is unaffected. The rest of the existing "one-tier" County Boroughs are to be reunited, for certain services, with the counties to which they geographically belong. At the same time, a number of unpopulous counties, too small for effective performance of modern services, are marked down for amalgamation, whereas others, regarded as too large, are to be split up. These latter include both Lancashire and the West Riding. At the other end of the scale, the Commission stresses the importance of preserving and developing the Parish Council, in rural areas, and throws out suggestions for a parallel development of reorganised "neighbourhood units" within large towns.

All this—and much besides on which we have no space to comment—makes the Report of the Boundary Commission easily the most important official document on local government issued during the present century. It could, no doubt, have covered a great deal more than it does; for it leaves undiscussed all the wider issues which are involved in the idea of Regionalism and regional devolution. It does not oppose Regionalism, nor are its projects necessarily in any way antagonistic to it. But it leaves that whole question aside, simply proposing a new framework of *local* government on which a form of Regionalism could be imposed a good deal more easily than on the existing structure. The aim of the Commissioners has been to devise a scheme of areas both adequate in size, without being larger than they need be, for the carrying out of the present range of local services, and calculated to break down the present artificial isolation of town and country, except in the case of very large towns. The exception is perhaps unfortunate (and perhaps largely tactical, as designed to con-

quer the County Boroughs by dividing them); but it need not matter if it is followed up by sufficient boundary extensions in favour of the excepted cities to give them a really substantial rural surround. This apart, the recommendations seem to be essentially sound, at any rate in relation to the treatment of the smaller County Boroughs and the amalgamation of the weaker Counties; and it is also plain common sense to propose abandonment of the present senseless distinctions of status and powers between non-county boroughs, urban districts, and rural districts, and to reduce them to a single type—with the wise concession of allowing old chartered boroughs to retain such ceremonial functions as they please.

This would mean that there would be in future four main types of local authority—Counties (including "one-tier" cities), new-style County Boroughs, no longer cut off for all purposes from the Counties in which they are situated, District authorities (including non-county Boroughs), and Parishes. Apart from the absence of proposals for co-ordination on a regional scale, this is a good and workmanlike plan, especially if real steps are taken to breathe life and power into the parish authorities and their "neighbourhood" equivalents in the towns. But . . . will any of it happen? Some day it must; for the existing structure is quite out of line with modern needs and standards of service. But how soon? Already the trumpets are everywhere blowing blasts of war; for the fewness of those who are interested is compensated by the fervour of their convictions. Almost every Councillor and almost every official seems to be convinced that the type of local authority he serves is the best, and ought to be made the model for everything else. Moreover, the Labour Party is awkwardly placed, because its strength is greatest in the big towns, many of which are threatened with having to lose part of their authority to the County Councils, in most of which Labour is weak. It is a significant fact that of all the Policy Reports drawn up by the Labour Party during the years of preparation for the victory of 1945, only one was the subject of hot dissent within the Party—and that one dealt with Local Government. Will the Labour Party in office feel like taking up this crown of thorns? It seems unlikely, at any rate till after 1950. Nor is it at all certain that, even after 1950, a new Government, of whatever party, will feel like tackling the job.

The job, however, will not wait. Unless it is tackled soon, comprehensively, it will have to be tackled piecemeal, inadequately, within the very limited powers at present conferred on the Commission. This will mean an unsatisfactory patch-up, and one that will obstruct, rather than help, further progress at a later stage. Let us hope that this Government, despite the uninvitingness of the rewards, will take courage, and give the Commission enlarged powers.

A LONDON DIARY

According to the barber, who has a friend who knows one of the gardeners at Buckingham Palace, there was quite a how-d'you-do about the flowers for Grosvenor Square. April 12th should have been just right for daffodils, and they were being most carefully tended in nice sandy boxes. But somebody left the lids on too long during the hot spell at Easter, and the daffodils all came out too early. So a special show of hydrangeas had to be put on at the last minute. I can't vouch for the truth of this story, but it is so far confirmed that the first thing I saw on arrival in Grosvenor Square was a very pretty display of hydrangeas, all nice and blue, as hydrangeas always are in the gardens of other people who can afford to feed them with a diet of rusty nails. All the other colours were doing their best, too. The grass was green where before, not so long ago, it had been churned to dust and mud by American lorries. The sky was more blue than it had any right to be in London, and the sun absolutely sparkled on Queen Mary's familiar toque and the Queen's elegant grey and the rows of sleek top hats and funereal morning coats which are considered suitable for English gentlemen on ceremonial occasions. There were, of course, a few exceptions; my wardrobe ran to nothing more mournful than a grey suit, and in front of me sat a small man in brown with his wife and child. He turned out to be the chief mason who directed the work, and he was very rightly accorded the longest chat with the King and Queen. The King read his tribute to Roosevelt in a strong unhesitant voice, and then he and Mrs. Roosevelt walked, like old friends, to the statue. This was the big moment. It passed splendidly, for when Mrs. Roosevelt pulled the cord—and she gave it a hearty tug—the falling Union Jacks revealed a living and agreeable statue of the President. I don't know or much care what the art critics will say about it. It is a good green colour, and it won't get to look like a bit of dirty railway station after a few years' weather. Secondly, it is exactly like Roosevelt, which I regard as a virtue in a portrait. The decision against a sitting posture seems justified; Roosevelt's infirmity is adequately suggested by the stick in his hand. The sculptor, Sir William Reid Dick, has solved the problem of modern dress, which has baffled so many, by giving Roosevelt his Inverness cape, which flows as well from his shoulders as any of the Roman togas which used to grace the statues of British statesmen. The statue is big, but not too big for Grosvenor Square, and I know no other monument in London that looks so genuine and full of life.

* * *

I wished the Marines did not keep on fainting. I saw half a dozen of them go down flat. One seemed to fall heavily with his head on the stone pavement. Of course, this may have been carefully arranged to remind the United States about the deficiencies of British diet—the contingent of American Marines had no losses!—but I suspect no such explanation is necessary. Probably they kept these lads too long rehearsing and standing at attention instead of arranging for relays. If Colonel Blimp tells me there is something wrong with the stamina of modern youth, I retort that soldiers have always fainted during ceremonial parades, unless taught to "roll on the feet and bend the knees." It is time to ease the strain and stop a traditional bit of silliness.

* * *

Mrs. Roosevelt is one of the best of women. She is a Liberal in the honest sense of that misused term. She cares about liberty and fights for it, whether it is the liberty of negroes or Americans accused of un-American activities and allowed no proper chance of defending themselves. She stands up to anyone, not only Russians, when they are disposed to deny the principles of the Uno Committee on Human Rights, and she says what she thinks and means what she says. It was a remarkable achievement, equalled as far as I know by no other American President's wife, to build up a separate public career for herself without embarrassing her husband's position while he was still President. Though her *My Day* is admittedly superficial and sometimes almost comically banal, it stands out from other gossip columns about the Great just because it is simple and sincere, and it had enough vitality to remain a popular feature of American journalism three years after Mrs. Roosevelt left the White House. About Roosevelt himself, whom I am sorry to say I met only once for a few minutes, hundreds of thousands of words have been written and spoken during the last few days. Many have been what is called well-chosen, and most of them have been true enough. But it is astonishing how people avoid touching on what is interesting or controversial. Was Roosevelt the friend or enemy of American capitalism? Many American business men used to talk of him during his lifetime with a quite extraordinary venom. Hanging was too good for him. They said he was a dictator and a Communist. It was quite impossible to make them see that his actual historical role was similar to that of Lloyd George, who, before the war of 1914, met with a similar hatred from the old ruling class when he carried through social reforms of the same character. Only in America's case Roosevelt was confronted with a situation of actual breakdown. For better or worse he prevented chaos and revolution, which were rapidly developing out of the great slump. And not far below the surface of many American minds to-day is the query whether a man of equal vision and equal capacity for democratic leadership will be found to lead the United States when, sooner or later, there is another economic catastrophe.

* * *

It was surely a pity that, after the statue had been built from the five-shilling subscriptions of ordinary people, the dinner to Mrs. Roosevelt should have been such a very snob affair. How different from the hot-dog picnic that the Roosevelts gave for the King and Queen in 1939. Lord Greenwood's remarks and the audience's applause for any particularly conservative sentiment suggested that the only excuse for inviting a Socialist Prime Minister in such a select gathering was that he could claim to be an "old boy" of Churchill's Cabinet. Mrs. Roosevelt, I think, must have listened with some quiet amusement to the tributes from Lord Greenwood and all his big business colleagues, whose opposite numbers in America were her husband's most bitter enemies.

* * *

I doubt whether there has ever been a Budget which so sharply divided a Government's own supporters. The T.U.C. obviously cannot make up its mind, and Labour Members with whom I have talked reveal startling differences of opinion varying from "a savage attack on the working-class" to "a real incentive Budget." One reason for these contradictory estimates is the difference in wage levels between various industries and regions, which is probably even greater than before the war. Engineering, for instance—and now coal mining—have an almost bourgeois interest in the new income tax reductions, whereas the agricultural worker and most transport workers receive no benefit from them because their incomes are so low that they are not liable to tax. So the poorer worker simply feels a proletarian grudge against the increase in the price of beer and cigarettes. This grudge might have been less violent if the Chancellor had got all the revenue he required by increasing the price of cigarettes and left beer alone. Smokers—like "pools investors"—nearly all of them have a guilty sense that they are wasting money; but beer is a beverage which millions believe essential. On the one point which everyone criticised—purchase tax on non-utility children's clothes—Sir Stafford has given way. But, even so, the position of the housewife is still unnecessarily difficult. When a working woman must pay 35s. for a pair of children's shoes, a growing boy's shirt can cost anything up to £2 and a young man's suit nearly £20, it is futile to expect trade unions to refrain from pressing wage claims. If it is necessary, as Sir Stafford rightly argues, to maintain food subsidies in order to prevent the inflationary pressure of wages, then the case for the restoration of the subsidy on utility clothes and shoes seems irresistible.

* * *

Open spaces, areas of wild and natural beauty, were always assumed, until our time, to be indestructible. To-day in the national drive for economic recovery they are continually threatened. Great cities covet catchment areas for reservoirs; hydro electric schemes entail dams, roads and cottages; new factories lead to a demand for the damming of rivers and the raising of the level of lakes; the electricity grid sends lines of pylons stalking across the skylines of the hills. Most threatening of all are the demands of the Service Departments. We rightly make a fuss when they propose to end the life of the village of Imber. But we are apt to forget that they already occupy nearly one and a half million

acres, mainly of unspoiled natural scenery, and are threatening to take more.

* * *

What are we to do about it? Ultimately it is hoped that wild country will receive full protection under an effective National Parks Authority imbued with a national instead of a purely local outlook and equipped with powers to stand up to the Service Departments. In the meantime one of the difficulties is that National Park areas are treated as if they were of purely local concern. This means that their administration is entrusted to comparatively poor local authorities, whose chief interest lies in development and the attraction of tourists, particularly rich tourists, to bring money to the district and assist the rates, and that the only people prepared to protect them from ill-conceived and often ruinously destructive development are voluntary societies like the C.P.R.E., the National Trust, and the Friends of the Lake District. I cannot help thinking that far more people ought to support these organisations. They put up a gallant rearguard action with very inadequate funds and membership and they are fighting the battle for quite a lot of people—for the Ramblers and Youth Hostels and the Cyclists' Touring Club—not to mention all who find refreshment on mountains and moors, and unspoilt coastguard paths and do not belong to any such organisations. We expect to find our favourite lake undrained and our favourite mountain unblasted when we repair there on holiday; most of us forget that those are now pleasures for which someone must work and pay.

* * *

Here is an American election crack I'd not heard before. The Republicans say: "George Washington never told a lie. Franklin Roosevelt never told the truth. Truman can't tell the difference."

CRITIC

RED EYES

An Argentine delegate at the Bogotá Conference reported that he had left in a U.S. Army lorry guarded by American soldiers who exchanged shots with Colombian Communists.—Press report.

The Colombian affair
Seemed to onlookers there
A revolt of the old fashioned kind,
The outbreak was not
Considered a plot
By the minions of Moscow designed.

Now the view has been changed,
It was all prearranged,
And the virtual certainty spreads
That the Liberal name
Cloaked a Communist aim
And the rebels are leagued with the Reds.

Colombians insist
They are not Communist,
But Argentines taking to flight
The version endorse
That the Reds were in force,
Colombians went Red overnight.

Their hearers may say,
Be that as it may,
Some Liberals also rebel;
The snipers, no doubt,
Will be fighting it out,
But how, if they're Reds, can you tell?

How, in Bogotá
Can they tell from afar?
Is the sight so uncommonly keen
That the Reds may be known
(With no uniform shown)
When the whites of the eyes can be seen?

Yes, each Communist nest
They subject to a test
Which penetrates every disguise,
One look is enough
To expose the Reds' bluff
When they just see the reds of the eyes.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.

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The 7,663 births registered in the 126 great towns of England and Wales for the week-ending March 27 were the lowest total for any week this year, says the Registrar-General's latest return, published to-day. The week, however, contained Good Friday.—*Star.* (C. F. Ellis.)

The Isle of Wight with a population of 92,000 is far below the desirable population minimum, but it is an island and cannot be conveniently united with the mainland. We therefore recommend no change.—*Report of the Local Government Boundary Commission.* (F. G. Williams.)

The presence of a Milk Marketing Board official in a cowshed so upset the cows that a Licences Committee officer who called later found their milk below the required standard, it was stated at the Public Health Committee here to-day . . .

It was agreed to disregard the sample and to send an officer to Park Farm when the Marketing Board man is elsewhere.—*News Chronicle.* (Finlay M. P. Lawson.)

"He is in a very depressed state. He is contemplating marriage," said the Deputy Chief Constable of a prisoner at Rochdale to-day.—*Manchester Evening News.* (I. Kershaw.)

When prisoner of war, Johann George Wetjen, returns to Germany in June, he will take with him his young English bride. Arrangements for their brief honeymoon were complicated by the fact that the bridegroom was under an obligation to return to his camp each night.—*Romford Times.* (O. P. Bouchier.)

THE GODS ARE ATHIRST

MR. ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON, able and unusually candid exponent of the Communist point of view, recently explained in the correspondence columns of this journal that it was useless to be any kind of Social Democrat because in every revolutionary situation, "there is a Gironde and a Mountain; and it is always the Gironde, the Liberals, the Third Force that gets squeezed out, and the Mountain that wins through and does the job." In short, fanatics always win and therefore the rest of us should abandon reason, tolerance and common sense. I believe that on reflection Mr. Robertson will agree that this is bad history, bad Marxism and even worse morality.

Let me take the historical point first and, as an illustration, begin with the profound revolution that changed Christendom into the Europe of sovereign States. The struggle took a predominantly religious shape; broadly the movement of Protestant reform was the revolt of the new middle and nationalist class against the strait-jacket of feudal and Papal control. In France the struggle was fought with the utmost bitterness; Protestants urged the duty of murdering Catholic kings and Catholics justified the massacre of St. Bartholomew on the ground that heretics must be exterminated. The Liberals, the Third Force, were temporarily squeezed out. The fanatics had it all their own way. The struggle was brought to an end, however, by a sceptical soldier who thought Paris worth a Mass. The war ended, as wars have often done in the past, in compromise, with the return of sanity and the victory of the Third Force.

A similar struggle tore Germany to pieces for thirty years. Again the Liberals were squeezed out. No horror was spared; Germany's evolution into a modern State was retarded for a century, with results which are familiar to the present generation. When the fanatics were tired out, the war ended once again in a compromise. The protagonists decided to live and let live; Catholic and Protestant princes accepted spheres of influence and even learnt, as time went on, to tolerate minorities within their frontiers. This was a decision that reason could have made in the time of Montaigne, but it took a century of blood-baths to convince the fanatics that mutual tolerance was preferable to competitive murder.

The moderate men had been right all the time. They did the job in the end, because the job could not be accomplished by violence. The job was to produce the conditions in which the new economy could function. Capitalist economy, as every Marxist will agree, was an advance on medieval; its arrival was made inevitable by the opening up of world communications, by new techniques of production and distribution, and by the growth of scientific thought. The development of these desirable tendencies was retarded by the fanatics.

As a further example none could be better than that chosen by Mr. Robertson himself. In eighteenth-century France feudalism was on its last legs. The aristocracy had maintained its position, but lost its functions. Economic power had shifted to the middle classes; the Government was hopelessly incompetent and deeply in debt. The States-General of 1789 has been well described by a historian as a meeting of the Government's creditors. It swept away the past regime, established representative government, recognised the rights of man and accepted—it had no alternative—the actual revolution that had taken place on the land. The peasants had carried out the agrarian revolution without asking for permission, just as they did in 1917 when, in Lenin's phrase, they voted with their legs. The necessary social change had taken place. But the Gods were athirst. Because the men of the Mountain wanted to destroy the Girondists, and the *Enragés* to purge the Jacobins, and everyone to out-do everyone else in their zeal to squeeze out the moderates, and because throughout Europe the defenders of the old regime were equally obstinate and fanatical, it took a generation of industrial and civil war, of reaction and dictatorship before the unescapable facts were recognised. The Third Force had been squeezed out? On the contrary, when the smoke had cleared away, the historian surveying the debris reached the correct (and incidentally Marxist conclusion) that revolution had been necessary and that it had accomplished just what far-sighted *philosophes* in the eighteenth century had seen must be accomplished. Feudalism had gone; the peasants owned the land; democratic institutions had come to stay. The historic task had been performed, but at an infinitely greater cost than in England where the threat of popular revolt carried through the final stage of the middle-class revolution in 1832 without bloodshed.

Take our own period. For the last thirty years Socialists and Communists, and many whose party allegiance has been less clearly defined, have seen that our society will crash in fragments unless we achieve Socialist organisation and at least enough world government to prevent a series of even more destructive wars. National sovereignty, national armies, private monopolies and a competitive struggle for the world's raw materials have become anachronistic and suicidal.

Where opposition to the necessary new order was blind and no machinery for change existed, as in Russian and other States that have not known a period of middle-class democracy, violent revolution was inevitable. Nor could any thinking observer imagine that so vast a political and economic transformation could anywhere take place smoothly. Wars and revolutions were to be expected. But from the recognition of the existence of the class-struggle to the claim that all who did not accept each twist of Kremlin policy are heretics was a far cry. Indeed it early became clear that Moscow was frequently wrong, especially about the Western World. Stalin seemed ready to recognise the Kremlin's limitations. He repeatedly stated that nations must find their own way to Socialism

by their own techniques and in accordance with their own traditions. It was Trotsky who belonged to the Mountain, and it was because Trotsky was defeated that the U.S.S.R. survived.

To-day the Soviet Union appears to have gone back to Trotskyism. So much so that some surmise that Stalin, perhaps for reasons of health, is no longer the dominant voice. At any rate it is clear that if Moscow's men of the Mountain are not content to stabilise their gains and to seek co-operation with Western Socialists who also desire world Socialism, then they are in effect declaring war not only on Fascists and class enemies but on the entire non-Communist world. Thus to-day Socialist governments which have worked with Communists in the past and were prepared to do so to-day—Burma is a good example—everywhere find themselves compelled to ban or arrest Communists. If you inform people that you intend to destroy them they will inevitably defend themselves, even if they agree with many of your objectives.

The result of Communist fanaticism is to play into the hands of reaction and even to revive Fascism in countries where middle-class tradition is strong. It also increases the danger of war and makes it very difficult for workers in capitalist countries effectively to oppose the reactionary policies of their own Foreign Offices. Social Democrats are weak enough, heaven knows; it seems unnecessary to solve their problem for them by informing them that, whatever they do, they are compromisers, Fascist beasts, fit only for liquidation. So once again an inevitable struggle is turned into fanatical war. Yet Marx wrote of a *Klassen-Kampf*, not a *Klassen-Krieg*.

When the historian reviews this epoch—if any records survive—he may perhaps report that the necessities of the age have been met. Some form of world Socialism there may no doubt be, even in a ruined world. He may add that if Communist tactics had been dictated by reason and not fanaticism, the necessary changes might have taken place without a third world war.

Let me now say something about the morality of Mr. Robertson's dictum. What does his statement amount to? That, instead of considering what methods are most suitable to achieve Socialism in our period and our conditions, we should blindly follow the lead of Moscow, on the ground that its intolerance and fanaticism are likely to win. Yet it is unlikely that the men of Moscow are exempt from the frailties of human nature: they do presumably err and their errors are likely to be more disastrous the more the pretence of their infallibility is maintained. It must surely be the duty of Mr. Robertson and other Socialists to criticise Communist policy as applied to the Western World. If Mr. Robertson has the courage to make an independent investigation, he will soon find that in private the more thoughtful Communists in Italy, France, in this country and even in some parts of Eastern Europe are alarmed by the fanaticism of Moscow. They know, for instance, that the refusal to attend the Paris Conference on Marshall Aid last summer was one of the greatest of Moscow's errors. If Eastern Europe had accepted Marshall's proposal, Moscow could have led the way in outlining a Socialist plan for economic recovery, and Europe might now be on the way to unity and Socialism—probably without the American aid that Moscow reasonably fears.

The argument that we must always act as henchman to the extremist is an appeal to all who have no faith, all who want power and forget the objectives for which power is desired. That is the main reason why Communist parties in the West deteriorate; why their more thoughtful and tolerant members so often resign; why in Germany, before Hitler, many Communists—though not the majority—changed sides when the Nazis looked like winning. Similarly to-day, numerous ex-Fascists have joined the Communist ranks in Italy. This is not because there is anything in common in their objectives. It is because the Communist's repudiation of what he calls middle-class morality—it is often the fundamental morality which belongs to all periods and not the trimmings of morality that change in every phase of history—induces him too easily to believe that power is all that matters. Marxists are therefore sometimes easier victims of Fascist demagogy than Social Democrats, who are apt to err in the opposite direction of hoping to achieve Socialism without dirtying their clothes in the dust of the arena. In a tough world some toughness is unavoidable, but that does not mean that we should embrace the ethics of the underworld.

No end can be achieved by means that are not compatible with it. If we fall into the historical and moral morass of urging intolerance because it seems for the moment to pay, we may, perhaps, achieve power, but we leave the job to be done by others who remember what it is. To-day the Gods are again thirsty. In the struggle for power, men believe themselves beyond good and evil. Tolerance, individual loyalty, pity for suffering—these become proofs of "weakness;" it is forgotten that these virtues have survived because they are the basis of all successful human co-operation. A moral relation between individuals and groups is still important, and it cannot be right or wise to be reckless and intolerant because other people are. It is the historic role of the Third Force to moderate the folly of fanatics and to repair the damage when the purges are over. They may retort, as they are squeezed out, that those who draw the sword often perish by the sword, leaving it to others to make and use the ploughshares—if they can.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

REPUBLICAN PROSPECTS

THE next President of the United States will probably be one of these four men: Governor Thomas E. Dewey, of New York; Senator Robert Taft, of Ohio; Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, of Michigan; and Harold E. Stassen, former Governor of Minnesota. All are Republicans.

As to the Democrats, there is still a chance that the divided and desperate party will switch from President Truman to General Eisenhower, against the latter's will, or to some other candidate. In that case a reappraisal of their rather thin chances would be necessary. As to the Republicans, there are a few more names that could be added to the four above, and they will be mentioned, but the chief prospect of Mr. Truman's successor centres on them.

The dominating feature of the American political scene is the collapse of the great coalition created by Mr. Roosevelt. Mr. Truman has not been able to handle this fiery team. The bolt of Henry A. Wallace on the Left and the revolt of the southern Democrats on the Right are due to almost diametrically opposite causes, but have this in common—a contempt for the unfortunate President. The plain fact is that the American people are crying for leadership and that they seem to consider Harry Truman a little man, well-intentioned, but inadequate for the agonising problems of the times.

As though this were not trouble enough for the Democrats, they have four straight presidential victories behind them, and few parties can hope to have a fifth. The Republican victory in the 1946 mid-term congressional elections indicated that the nation is ripe for a change of faces. Unless something happens very remarkable indeed, almost any Republican can win this election.

There is nothing in British politics equivalent to an American party. It is a loose, shifting coalition, conceived on a continental scale and differing widely in viewpoint even in adjacent States. It is as though all Western Europe had united into a single nation and then tried to express itself politically through two parties—parties built around similar ideological principles and varying economic interests. The Republican party has tended to represent the propertied classes, the landed farmer and the business groups; the Democrats have generally included the big city proletariat, bound by paradoxical historical ties since the Civil War with the conservative South. (The alliance is something like that of the Quebec French-Canadians with the Mackenzie King Liberal coalition.) The Democrats tend to be less conservative than the Republicans, despite their southern allies, and this was notably true under Roosevelt. However, it is exceedingly difficult to define the precise difference between the two great parties, and millions of independent voters holding the balance of power see it chiefly as between those who are "in" and those who are "out." However much a European may scoff at this singular system, the great advantage of it is that it works, probably proving the Anglo-Saxon genius for self-government despite all obstacles.

The point of all this as it relates to the Republican presidential nomination race is that the campaign is based very largely on personalities, not principles. Analysis of the candidates emphasises this.

Governor Dewey, 46, of New York, is the man with the famous brush moustache. Like all the four except Taft, he is a self-made man. He once considered grand opera, and his voice over the radio is rich, deep and deliberate. He won fame as a gang-buster prosecutor. He is an able administrator and has surrounded himself with competent advisers, including the internationalist John Foster Dulles. His control of New York party delegates makes him a formidable contender for the nomination. On the adverse side there is a strong and widespread feeling that he is coldly opportunistic, clever and ruthless. During all 1947, while the nation clamoured for guidance, Dewey avoided the risk of alienating factions and took a stand on no controversial issue. His fixed and frozen smile, his moustache and a certain mannikin quality have found popular expression in the phrase that he is "the groom on the wedding cake." He was the Republican candidate in 1944 defeated by Roosevelt.

Taft (58) has been the chief rival of Dewey. He is the eldest son of a former president and led his class at Yale and at Harvard Law School. He is the most conservative of the Republican candidates and the least internationalist. He is the darling of the Col. Blimps and Tory primitives, but he is far abler than this would indicate. He is a man of integrity and moral courage; he has an attractive honesty and a habit of blurting out tactless opinions better left unsaid, followed up by a disarming schoolboy grin. Taft is a statistical demon, a Mr. Sobersides, who gobbles up tables and dull reports and is the best informed man in Congress. By sheer diligence and brain-power he has made himself Republican leader on domestic issues. But Taft is hopelessly parochial. He tried to kill the British loan and reduce the Marshall Plan. He is what American was, up to Pearl Harbour; America changed, not Taft. It has been said unkindly of him that he has the best mind in the Senate until he makes it up.

Third major contender, and winner of the Wisconsin primary on April 6, is Stassen, 41, a former Governor of Minnesota. He is a big, earnest, attractive figure, six-foot-three, weighing 220 pounds, of mixed Norwegian, Czech and German descent. He is a younger Wendell Willkie in open-mindedness and world outlook. On social problems he is probably the most liberal of the Republicans. More than the others he has the gift of attracting men's loyalties and evoking the energies of youth. He was a delegate to the U.N. San Francisco meeting, with Mr. Vandenberg, and made a world tour in which he interviewed Stalin. Before the Marshall Plan was announced, he shocked many by boldly suggesting that America set aside 10 per cent. of its total goods and food, for ten years, to rehabilitate the world. There is a confused side to Stassen. At times he seems unable to differentiate between the British Labour Government and Russian Communism, and he toyed with the idea of making British aid contingent on a promise not to nationalise steel. He has an almost mystical belief in American Capitalism and regards Euro-

pean Socialism as a monumental failure. He feels it is un-American to tax away more than half a man's income. Stassen has an engaging open-mindedness, however, that makes it possible to believe he is moving with the times. His great political handicap is that he has so antagonised his rivals, Taft and Dewey, that they are apt to combine against him if they despair of the nomination themselves. And that leads to the fourth figure.

Nearly everybody's second choice is Senator Vandenberg (64), of Michigan, who ostentatiously is not running for the nomination at all. Current prospects are that the Republican nominating convention will be deadlocked by the three leading contenders, and that the result will be Vandenberg or some other dark horse. Right to the last of the war Vandenberg was just as isolationist as Taft still is. He opposed lend-lease, fought the draft, resisted Roosevelt. Then suddenly, in a speech in January, 1945, he recanted. He had brooded over robot bombs and become a One Worlder. Doubtless this switch was sincere, and it was likewise extremely opportune. As a consequence, more than any other man in Congress, he has been responsible for keeping American foreign policy bi-partisan and internationalist; more than any other man in the country he has been responsible for leading millions of soul-searching fellow Republicans out of isolationism into the new day. (He was greatly aided in this by Russian intransigeance.) Few Englishmen make due allowance for the recent extraordinary shift in traditional American thinking. Vandenberg has helped lead the way; he has humour, intelligence, affability and earnestness. He has a towering party prestige on international matters. On social issues his record is mediocre—he voted against most of the New Deal reforms, though whether this was from personal conviction or party loyalty is hard to say.

Lesser Republican candidates include the gaudy General MacArthur, an elderly De Gaulle backed by the Hearst-MacCormick press; Governor Warren, of California, a "Republican Truman"; Speaker Martin, of the House of Representatives—a party wheel-horse whom it is hard to take very seriously; and the able, but relatively unknown, Senator Baldwin, of Connecticut.

It is still an open race among Republicans and final predictions are impossible. In the Wisconsin primary Stassen had an unexpected and spectacular victory which greatly enhanced his prestige, apparently eliminated MacArthur and badly damaged Dewey. In the Nebraska primary on April 13th Stassen swept still further ahead. The Republican bosses who are distrustful of Stassen, will now more than ever attempt to throw the nomination to Vandenberg.

These preliminary Mid-Western tests seem to show the Republicans rejecting a Man-on-horseback type, moving away from isolationism and turning to a more candid, modern leadership than they followed during the long Roosevelt eclipse. Mr. Truman's prestige, from personal and political factors, has fallen to a new low, and nearly everybody will be glad to see the disorganised administration reshuffled or replaced. It is true that a Republican victory, if it comes, will confirm the Rightist swing of 1946. Actually, however, save for weak resistance from an almost impotent Truman, this is already in effect.

Any new President will have a natural curiosity about Stalin and may want to see him. With the possible exception of Taft, all the Republican candidates would continue the present Marshall-Vandenberg foreign policy for better or worse. From the point of view of British Socialism, the economic views of the prospective next American president may seem bleak and singular. It can only be said that they have advanced immeasurably in contrast to a generation ago as a legacy of the New Deal. As to foreign affairs, the change from former isolationism has been even greater. Few nations have ever come so far so fast. World trends may continue the process whoever is next President.

Washington, April 14th. RICHARD STROUT

SIAMESE POLITICS

THE Siamese have their own peculiar way of playing politics. Last week a group of officers wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, Nai Khuang, informing him that he no longer had the confidence of the Army. The letter was in effect an ultimatum from the Military Dictator, Marshal Pibun Songramm. Within the next twenty-four hours, the Prime Minister was told to form a new coalition Cabinet, get rid of princes who were in high posts and exert closer control over foreigners in Siam (meaning the Chinese). If he did not obey there would be another *coup* and another government. Khuang and his Cabinet meekly resigned, and Pibun, who has made many unconvincing statements that he wished to retire from politics, has made himself Prime Minister, and is now forming a Cabinet. His first appointments come from his own military *entourage*.

This is the third Government in five months. The first of these, whatever its weaknesses, had at least the merit of being the first Siamese Government to be elected under the new Constitution. It was overthrown last November, also by Marshal Pibun. This coup was a quiet affair; it made less commotion in Bangkok than firecrackers on the eve of the Chinese New Year. Tanks and soldiers were posted at all strategic points and Ministers awoke on the Sunday morning to find that the Marshal had got rid of many of the younger, more progressive Ministers and, above all, of Pridi. He had been the chief architect of the 1932 revolution, which ended the absolute monarchy; and he was the most outstanding of Siam's political leaders.

The following day, Nai Khuang, leader of the Democrat Party which was the official Opposition, agreed to form an interim Government for 90 days, after which he promised a General Election. During that period the Marshal stayed in the background, and Nai Khuang's interim Government had the advantage of a number of honest Ministers who declared that they would carry through a constructive programme and at the same time put an end to the corruption which has been the worst element in Siamese politics and which had still flourished under Pridi's rule. But they made a serious miscalculation if they believed that they were really in power and that the Marshal's discreet self-effacement signified a change of heart.

The General Election last January was unfair even by Siamese standards. Pridi had escaped to Singapore; a number of progressive M.P.'s who had disappeared at the time of the coup were still absent whilst others who had been arrested were not released in time to be put on the electoral roll, and everyone under the age of 35 was disqualified from standing for parliament. In Bangkok, the only politically active city of any size in Siam, only about 20 per cent. of the people voted. Nai Khuang was the obvious Prime Minister. He chose a Cabinet, very similar to that of his interim Government, and it included a number of able and honest men. It was a mere formality when the Government was given a vote of confidence in the Lower House (elected) and then in the Upper House (chosen by the King). It was a Government of big landlords, old civil servants and princes. Yet the Prime Minister had grand schemes of hydro-electrification and transport, similar to those put forward by Pridi in his "Yellow Book," and the Ministers of Agriculture and Finance were both men with constructive ideas.

It is this newly-elected Government that Pibun has now overthrown. He may have disliked its schemes of reform and he certainly shared the Army's view that the Government should check the increasing power of Chinese immigrants in Siam. In any case he has made it clear that the only figure big enough to challenge him and the Army group is Pridi, now exiled in Singapore. Everything has been done to malign Pridi, and to undermine the influence he still has among the people. Rival politicians associate him with the King's death which happened two years ago. No one really believes it and a fantastic commission of inquiry still plods away trying to find the smallest bit of evidence against him. He is criticised for his unwillingness to get rid of some of his followers who were notoriously corrupt, and in this there is a certain justification. Finally, the princes can never forget that it was his influence and ability which led to the end of the absolute monarchy in 1932. To-day, it is his one-time associate who is in the saddle. But Marshal Pibun Songramm has only military power. Government by a military clique cannot inspire confidence at home or abroad.

DOROTHY WOODMAN

The Arts and Entertainment

RADIO NOTES

SATIRE on the air: when one considers the nature of satire, of that which goes further and deeper than the sting of a good revue sketch, it seems unlikely. There's no need to imagine a modern Swift—you'd need a Fourth or even a Fifth Programme, with a correspondingly small listening public, to take the radio equivalent of *Gulliver* or *A Modest Proposal*; it's enough to imagine the cries of outraged squeamishness and indignation which would greet a programme comparable in subject and scope to *The Loved One*. Radio, like the film, and for similar reasons, restricts the writer's freedom of choice of theme and treatment to a much greater extent than does the novel or the play. This being so, it was perhaps foolish to have expected more than one got from the B.B.C.'s latest ventures in what it calls satire, Mr. Peter Watts's *Hurrah for Womanhood!* and its companion-piece *Lords of Creation*, written in the style of Mr. Watts by someone calling himself or herself "Femina." One may wonder whether it is any more possible to indict a whole sex than a whole nation, but in satire anything is fair so long as it succeeds. What one got, of course, was not satire but merely a farrago of traditionally accepted prejudices about the sexes, an exhibition of stock types derived rather, one would say, from an exhaustive study of the illustrated jokes in a century of comic papers than from actual observation. There was little to indicate that Mr. Watts has himself ever seen a woman or "Femina" a man. Both productions had their bright lines, and there was a general agreeable illusion of high spirits, but one could not, as one listened, repress the feeling that the types burlesqued in *Ilma* had much more life and showed much more accuracy of observation and that, at a more comparable level of intention, the treatment of the subjects would have gained in economy and wit if Miss Grenfell and Mr. Potter had handled them.

An idea which another writer might have used as the basis of satire the radio-dramatist who writes under the name of Blair preferred to treat allegorically. His interesting play, *All Men Governing*, described as "a fantasia of the 'isms'" and depressing enough in its implications, turned on the clash between what used to be called paternalism, a more or less benevolent authoritarian rule, and the desire for liberty. An imaginary channel island, which its inhabitants have failed to run as a collective farm, is taken over and exploited, to the material benefit of everyone, by an American capitalist; but the restoration of political rights to the islanders leads to a breakdown in efficiency, political strife, industrial unrest and its consequences. Blair does not strike me as a graceful writer; what his play lacked was wit, a certain lightness of touch. But it held the attention and in the end impressed because of its very sobriety and seriousness; a real problem was being tackled. What one wanted, given the plot, was Shaw; what one got was something like Galsworthy. One could have, one generally does have, much worse.

Now let me surprise myself by praising *The Critics*, a programme which for months has obstinately failed to come up to the idea behind it, failed for a number of reasons. Inevitably there have been wild as well as wise men among the chosen critics.

There was, for instance, a book critic, a Mr. John Connell, who broadcast his considered opinion that Ford Madox Ford's Tietjens novels were as good as *War and Peace*. Then there have been the chairmen—windy chairmen, fussy chairmen, funny chairmen. At last the ideal chairman seems to have been found in Mr. Eric Newton; and last week the critics were worthy of him. No one played for laughs, the curse of this kind of programme; they had good stuff to discuss and discussed it vigorously. For once, almost for the first time, one was made to feel that one was listening to the talk of men for whom, however they might disagree, the arts profoundly *mattered*.

WILLIAM SALTER.

THE MOVIES

"The Murderers are Amongst Us" and "Flame of New Orleans," at the Academy "Miranda," at the Odeon

With handshakes and smiles the new battle of Berlin is being fought. This week's newsreel (Paramount) shows us some protagonists in action. Sokolovsky and Monty on the airfield: how, it would seem, could old friends encounter more happily? Raising cameras the Russian officers cluster round. Shoot! The sun shines. A banquet beckons. True, at some little distance, there's a smashed plane, and beyond that we are shown the portrait of Stalin, towering fifty feet high, and spanning a boulevard. But why worry? He too, in his way, looks pleased. On every face there is the modest smirk of triumph that says, *Take note: it's beginning all over again.*

The relics from last time make the drama of *The Murderers Are Amongst Us*. Berlin itself! Good God, here is a skyline to set against New York's; and German camera-work has not failed to impress it. No upper storeys, no roofs, no glass; a mass of rubble like grimy snowdrifts, and in that drift lanes leading to cellars, an old woman creeping, windy stairways, people hiding from the elements and from one another. At evening the rare thin façades rise with extraordinary power against the sunset. The street lamps go on, each registering its pale circle of desolation. A man hurries out from one of the rat-holes; after him runs a woman calling; the two walk towards us, dwarfed by the spectacle of ruin.

The three chief personages who inhabit this post-war scene are a smug spectacled family man (Arno Paulsen), once a captain whose orders have sent women and children to the mass grave; a surgeon (Ernst Fischer) half-crazed by his memory of these events; and his woman (Hildegard Knef), a girl from a concentration camp. Three representative figures. Their drama resolves itself to the point where the half-crazed idealist takes up his profession of healing again and is prevented by the woman from shooting the tender butcher, who incidentally has done well enough for himself to have glass in his windows and cigarettes in his case.

Well, it is a grim, emphatic, pictorially haunting drama or fragment of one. (The director is Wolfgang Staudte.) Here, once more, are the dramatic lighting, the use of close-up, the shadows, the hysteria, the linking of realism and nightmare that distinguished the pre-Nazi film. But has that technique at all advanced, and why is it that so obviously tragic a theme should move us so little? It grips, it appals, but it doesn't greatly move. One has the feeling that the whole thing has been fabricated—admirably fabricated—out of emotions chosen to meet the occasion. Such an artificiality was, perhaps, to be expected. Only out of *moderate* suffering, I believe—the Germans inflicted and incurred too much—can genuine art arise. For that reason the Italian films *Open City* and *To Live in Peace* contain far more humanity, tragedy and living impulse than *The Murderers Are Amongst Us*, despite their comparative lack of skill. That, however, is the extent of one's criticism, because I don't see how in the circumstances this film could have turned out otherwise. As such, it is remarkable.

Flame of New Orleans, an old film and the most charming produced by Clair's sojourn in Hollywood, brings a needed light relief to the Academy programme; and in *Miranda* an English attempt to be Clairish provides at least a not unamusing frolic about a mermaid swithing her tail in London.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

KARAJAN: TRAVIATA

Much as we may dislike being told in advance just what we are to think of a new conductor ("greatest since Toscanini" and so on), it would be foolish to deny that Herbert von Karajan ranks among the first flight. His programme last Sunday included Schumann's Piano Concerto, in which Dinu Lipatti played the solo part with that combination of technique and fine sensibility which distinguishes him from even his most formidable rivals among post-war virtuosi. Herr von Karajan showed his mettle at once by a reading of Strauss's *Don Juan*, remarkable for its clarity and balance and for the beautiful tone and phrasing which he coaxed out of the Philharmonia strings. His stance and beat are idiosyncratic, so much so that at certain moments (the soft A minor chord at the end of *Don Juan* was one, the opening bar of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony another) the orchestra was misled into a ragged attack. His movements are not particularly violent or demonstrative, but his whole bearing reflects an intense inward concentration, amounting almost to a kind of trance. Observation seemed actually to confirm the extraordinary statement in the programme that he habitually conducts with his eyes shut, behaviour which implies a curious neglect of one of the conductor's most valuable channels of communication. All this may sound affected and sensational, but what matters is not the method but the result; and Herr von Karajan's Beethoven was indeed wonderful in its power and flexibility, and in its many extreme refinements of tonal quality and balance never purchased at the expense of that strong forward current which was felt to impel each movement irresistibly to its end. To take one instance: when has that series of upward octaves on the wood-wind, in the second variation of the slow movement, sounded so magical—almost like a page of Schubert? And when has the whole movement seemed so short.

Sophie Fedorovitch's sets and costumes for *La Traviata* at Covent Garden are extremely decorative, the most attractive I have seen in any London opera production since the war. It is also a pleasure to be able to praise the Covent Garden lighting, which was free from *Valkyrie*-vagaries and achieved a moment of beautiful dramatic intensity after the departure of Violetta for Paris, when a Turgeniev-like dusk fell around the stern father and his desolate son. Guthrie's production is always inventive and lively, but he has allowed his stage to become so overcrowded at Flora's party that one suspected the presence of other gate-crashers besides the Germonts. The music showed many signs of careful rehearsal (e.g., the unusually effective off-stage effects), but Reginald Goodall's handling of the score was prim, and deficient in Italian sparkle and impulse, especially in the vivacious first act. Neate was a personable but wooden Alfredo, Silveri a substantial Germont *père*, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, a pretty but vocally unsatisfying Violetta, partly because of the lack of resonance and definition in her middle register, and partly because she flutters and gasps too much instead of relying on the immeasurably expressive beauty of pure cantilena; she was at her best in the gambling scene. On the whole, a very fair *Traviata*, especially for those who live by the eye rather than by the ear.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

ADRIAN RYAN

ADRIAN RYAN is not 45; he is 27. Yet the large new paintings now at the Redfern Gallery are such as might bring no uncertain distinction to a painter twice as old, even causing us, perhaps, to acclaim a minor master. At an age when "promise" is the most that can usually be attributed, there are respects in which Ryan is already masterly; but these special powers—a richness of actual paint, a mature fullness of form, an expressiveness of impasto—only serve to show how isolated he is here. His originality would be remarked on either side of the English Channel; but in England only Matthew Smith could possibly be thought to have assisted the development of such a talent. His early preoccupation was Soutine; then Utrillo. Add that for him Courbet and Van Gogh are not the distant objects of a natural reverence but forces actively impinging upon his personal vision, and Adrian Ryan's remoteness from his contemporaries should be evident. For Ryan, Cubism's reconstruction of the more familiar objects of our world, might never have taken place—that splintering-up of receding planes, that destruction of the distance in landscape, that reorganisation of depth and volume in terms of shallow but potent facets. The majority of the most talented younger painters seem to construct their images from the picture-surface inwards: all suggestion of the depth and volume of their forms has to come to terms with an all-powerful surface design. But Ryan's forms lie, from first to last, in a naturalistic space behind the picture surface—and in an order which resembles the spatial dispositions of the natural world, but resembles them no more and no less closely than is the case in Van Gogh.

I say a naturalistic space is constructed in Ryan's pictures; but no one could be less concerned with the photographic nor with realistic accuracy. To Ryan Courbet has imparted a love of humble actuality—the fish is a fish and only a fish and it is dead, on its side, on the table. In the matter of paint Ryan has learnt most from Soutine: and at first he also followed that gifted but very limited artist in allowing free rein to the impulse of the hand to scribble; so that the forms evoked by the swirling brushstrokes were increasingly made to coincide as it were with the rhythms of the scribble instead of impressing something of their own character upon that scribble. Scribble (brush-work, if you'd rather) is only impressive, only powerful, when it evokes that which is not scribble; when, by some miracle never to be explained, it conveys to us the precise formal character of a subject, which we sense *through* it. Painting requires the tension between the thing depicted, the "subject," and the pictorial means: Soutine's distortions are often no longer credible, for he, too, frequently subordinates his subject to those very gestures in pigment which should describe and evoke it.

Ryan's glutinative mixtures are equally rich without being desperate: they are not a compensation for inadequate or improbable formal structures, as in Soutine; rather they adorn his forms as limpets and mussels adorn rocks—and such incrustation actually assists definition of the forms underlying it. Like Soutine's, Ryan's distortions are suggested by the paint already on the canvas, as well as by the impulses of the hand; but he has more restraint than Soutine and his forms are therefore clearer, both in themselves and in relation. There is plenty of air flowing in and out between the trees and cottages: yet there is no atmospheric diffusion of colour; a cliff (half a mile away) or the sea's horizon come suddenly near and dark, are as strong in colour as the pebbles in the foreground, or the nude curled upon them, across the centre of the canvas, over whose hip that sea and cliff appear. The daring of this nude in a setting of sea and cliff is immense: does he succeed in taking the eye slowly up over pebbles, a towel, then up the inches of the belly, up to the receding contours of thigh and hip, to the "vanishing planes" which are the outline of the hip against . . . the sea?

Can we accept the relation of that outline, three yards away, to the twenty miles of sea? I think we can enjoy it greatly: but there are elements of strain in this and others among his larger canvases; I think his greatest difficulties are always in the architecture, the build-up of the composition. His prolonged contemplation is reflected in the incredibly rich texture of any given area of canvas. As we look into these mixtures we are aware that the forms have evolved out of the handling of the paint itself. Such identity of ends and means precludes, on the whole, that imaginative failure so typical of English painting, the failure to fuse the poetic idea and its pictorial statement. The vehicle of Ryan's poetry is Ryan's colour and form: salt spray comes off the prussian-blue, chunky sea, which is somehow watery and *solid* at the same time. Although the total design flows faultlessly in only ten of these paintings (1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 20), and the largest are almost too ambitious, that a painter of very great gifts is here at work should be clear to all.

PATRICK HERON

Correspondence

MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS

SIR,—Mr. Kingsley Martin's article on Muslims and Christians, though doubtless intentionally provocative, seems to me more than a little unfair both to Anglo-Saxon religion and to Islam. Christianity is by no means wholly other-worldly, and its insistence on the battle with evil, both spiritual and physical, in *this* world, is far more "Western" than "Eastern": one of its most important modern exponents was William Temple, and even "public-school religion" is deeply influenced by this facet of Christianity (modern public schools, Mr. Martin, have advanced somewhat since Stalky and Co.). If Gandhi was Christianity's "most important modern exponent," he was also a most unorthodox exponent of Hinduism: his work for the Untouchables and for communal peace outraged orthodox Hindu opinion. Should we then say that no religion could be more alien to Eastern civilisation than Hinduism, whose rigid caste system offends against Christian—and Muslim—universalism?

For surely Islam itself teaches the brotherhood of man, with respect and tolerance especially for all other "Peoples of The Book"? Before political Zionism came on the scene, for better or for worse, there was very little "anti-Semitism" in the Middle East—the very term is an anomaly among peoples themselves Semitic. (Has not Mr. Martin omitted in his analysis the instinctive sympathy of the British in Palestine for the native inhabitants seen as defending their soil against the foreign invader?). Again, Islam rejects a godless belief in material progress (witness the fight by the pious Senussi of the Western Desert and Cyrenaica against the Italian "civilising" process); and it is the perversion of this rejection into the acceptance of appallingly low standards of living that irritates many British administrators in the Middle East who have genuinely wished to improve these standards. But the failure of the majority of Arabs to practice the teachings of Islam does not condemn Islam any more than the parallel Anglo-Saxon failure condemns Christianity.

Unfortunately these confusions, as they seem to me, do not affect Mr. Martin's contention that the rising Muslim intelligentsia is going to be fanatically nationalist and anti-Western. "Can the West," asks Elizabeth Monroe in the *Observer*, "portray itself as having something to offer" (in the Middle East) "to the young man and the reformer?" Alas, the Left in Arab countries is understandably enough far gone already in nationalist anti-Westernism. But the best in Islam could still be in harmony with the social precepts of Christianity, which are, even at worst, latent in Anglo-Saxon democracy. OLIVER COBURN

SIR,—We all know that "public school religion" is not Christianity, but neither is Christianity what Mr. Kingsley Martin thinks it is. He may have his own ideas of what Christianity connotes, but they are not those of the Christian Church, which alone has the authority and experience necessary for its explication. Mr. Kingsley Martin falls into the common misconception that the Sermon on the Mount is a complete account of the Christian ethic, and so he emphasises the "meek and gentle" Christ to the disregard of the stern and relentless Christ who sabotaged the temple market and thundered at the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Christ combined in perfect unison the two opposites of meekness and fierceness, however difficult it may be for us to do likewise or even reconcile the two. Mr. Kingsley Martin doesn't see that phrases about "turning the other cheek," etc., belong to the method of teaching by proverb and hyperbole, which Christ adopted and which was well understood by Orientals.

One gets sick of outsiders thinking to be able to assess the Christian Faith by quoting texts from the Bible. The Church alone knows what is the content of the Christian religion, because it has received from Christ the command and power to expound it. Were Mr. Kingsley Martin within the Church he would understand that though Christianity is a difficult religion, never yet fully practised on a wide front, the Church has never failed in her formularies to hold up as the ideal the lofty standard taught by Christ, to which her best members have in various degrees approximated. Islam sets a low standard and may get a greater measure of literal compliance; Christianity sets the highest standard, to which men can only approximate, because unless we are always trying to be better we shall not succeed in being even tolerably good. ALFRED DRU DRURY, C.R.

House of the Resurrection, Mirfield, Yorks.

CATHOLICS AND POLITICS

SIR,—Mr. Arnold Lunn is, I believe, a convert to Roman Catholicism. To judge by his letter, he has been very insecurely grounded in the doctrines of the Church, and I should say myself that he ought to take a refresher course of instruction. He tells us, for example, that he "pleaded" with some bishop in Madrid to allow Spanish Protestants to propagate their religion. No Catholic who understood the principles of his faith could have made such an absurd suggestion; and the Spanish prelate must have found it a little difficult to keep a straight face. It is just as if some simple soul were to "plead" with Stalin to provide every facility in Moscow for the spread of capitalist propaganda. The Spanish bishop knew—even if Mr. Lunn did not—that the Roman Church could not, without self-stultification, make any such concession.

I find it somewhat embarrassing and what used to be called "shymaking" to have to clear up Mr. Lunn's mind on the subject of his adopted religion, but it is surely part of the very ABC of Catholic doctrines that the Roman Church alone is divinely inspired to teach; that all other religious teaching is false; and that wherever and whenever the Church, aided by the Civil Power, is strong enough, such false doctrine involving, as it does, the execrable errors of "freedom of conscience," "freedom of the press," etc., must be stamped out ruthlessly.

It is true, of course, as Mr. Lunn argues that here in England and elsewhere *in partibus infidelium* the Roman Church does not show itself so intransigent. From motives of opportunism, awkward truths are kept out of sight. An amusing case cropped up a year or two ago in these columns. The late Cardinal Hinsley, during the education campaign of 1942-3, allowed it to be supposed that the Roman Church was out for the right of all parents, non-Catholic as well as Catholic, to educate their children according to their conscience. This flatly contradicts the teaching of the Vatican. The Rev. J. V. Simcox, who had lectured on Canon Law for 23 years in a Catholic seminary, pointed out in your columns the implied heresy. In spite, however, of persistent efforts he could not induce the ecclesiastical authorities to state unequivocally whether it was, or was not, sound Catholic doctrine to advocate such freedom of conscience. And there followed only a prolonged and painfully comic silence. (*cf. Is the Roman Catholic Church a Secret Society?* by John V. Simcox.)

HAROLD BINNS

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

SIR,—Western spokesmen regard the Czechoslovak February crisis as a Communist "coup"; we, in Czechoslavakia, see in these events the climax of a protracted struggle carried on by the Conservative section of the community against the consequences of the Revolution of May, 1945.

The nationalisation of key industries and of the banks, and the partition of the large estates and their distribution among small-holders, dealt a severe blow to international business interests both abroad and in Czechoslovakia.

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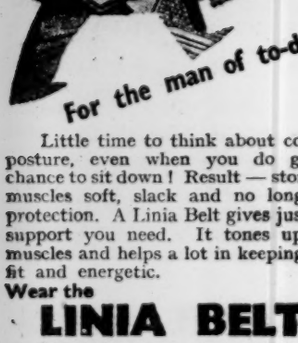

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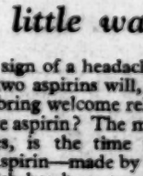

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other sections of the working population, including the farmers and the intelligentsia, had to be won over to the workers' cause. The National Front of Socialist and democratic parties was the expression of a broad unity of all sections of the community, based on common aims.

Understandably enough, such reactionary elements as remained endeavoured to find a platform for counter-revolutionary policy. This platform was in due course provided by the National Socialist Party, rooted as it was in its petty-bourgeois conception of "progress."

A similar development took place in Slovakia, where the Democratic Party became a centre of semi-Fascist activity. These obstacles to constructive work were counteracted by the presence of a strong Social Democrat-plus-Communist majority in Parliament. But the National Socialist Party, in the end, openly came out against the Trade Union movement, against Works Councils and all the other social gains of the workers. It attacked the "inefficiency" of nationalised industries, and thus attempted to win the petty-bourgeois section of the population over into the anti-Socialist camp.

The next step was an attempt to undermine the basis of co-operation between Social Democrats and Communists. The Brno Conference was, in fact, a National Socialist victory; it is not surprising that the result pleased those who had never ceased to regret the passing of the era of Czechoslovak capitalist industry and "bourgeois democracy," which provided such abundant scope for Western business in its exploitation of Central and Eastern Europe.

From the Brno Conference until the events of February, 1948, the National Front laboured under a protracted crisis. The National Socialist Party became the nucleus of a definite anti-Socialist bloc, aiming at the complete isolation of the Communist Party in the Government. This made the National Front virtually unworkable, and a split in the united trade union movement seemed menacingly close.

Mistakenly, our reactionaries trusted the power of international capitalism, and believed that the Socialist forces at home had been sufficiently isolated to make possible a coup which was to deal a crushing blow to all Socialist aspirations. The Right-wing Ministers resigned from the Government in the assurance that the Social Democrat Party would follow their lead, and that this counter-revolutionary campaign would find its confirmation in a National Socialist election victory.

The events of February, 1948, in Czechoslovakia provide a historic lesson. Where the machinery of Government is not in the hands of a capitalist minority, the guarantee of the victory of Socialist democracy lies in the unity of the working class and can be achieved without conflict or civil war. It is preposterous to claim—as the Western capitalist Press tries to do—that the February crisis constitutes a putsch, a violent overthrow of law and order. It sufficed that three million workers in Prague, on February 21, demonstrated their unity; that a one-hour token strike manifested the solidarity and discipline of the working class. The Right-wing leaders were thus reduced to insignificant private persons, terrified at the results of their tactics.

The events of February, 1948, mean the end of class-war in Czechoslovakia. The working class has now gained final leadership, and has reaffirmed its resolution to supplant the capitalist order by democratic and peaceful methods. Let the West, if it likes, speak of putsch, of terror, of the end of democracy in Czechoslovakia. Certainly, this is the end of democracy as conceived by the bourgeoisie for its own selfish ends. It is also the beginning of Socialist democracy, of complete political and economic equality.

We should like the workers of the Western democracies to see for themselves whether the new Czechoslovakia constitutes a threat to the rights of the common man or to world peace. We shall value their praise or criticism, and shall be fortified thereby on our road towards Socialism.

EVŽEN ERBAN
Minister of Social Welfare, General Secretary, Czechoslovak Trade Unions.

WRITERS AND THE CHANCELLOR

SIR,—May I enlarge on the financial position of foreign authors in this country? As your readers will have learned from Mr. Joseph's article, all works by foreign authors published and performed in this country on a royalty contract are liable to the full amount of British Income Tax, i.e., 9s. in the £, without having the benefit of any allowances whatsoever, the only exception being American authors in view of the double taxation agreement.

This is extremely unfair in view of the fact that the foreign author has to pay his native income tax on top of the British one and is then left normally with no more than 30 per cent. of all he earns in this country. It is doubly unfair in view of the fact that reciprocity exists only in a few cases and here only to a very mild degree. May I give you a list of all those countries where British authors get their whole revenue, tax free? They are: Finland, Holland, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, Portugal, Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, Greece, Iceland and the South American Republics. The only cases where foreign income tax is charged are Czechoslovakia 15 per cent., France 20 per cent., Hungary 6 per cent.

Your readers will realise that this preposterous and unilateral state of affairs does not encourage that free cultural interchange which is so essential a part of international understanding. JAN VAN LOEWEN
International Copyright Agency.

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED

SIR,—Why does "Critic" regard the principle of first come, first served as fairer than the present method of getting a meal ticket at Paddington, by knowing the steward or by brute force? Neither method is fair, though queuing is rather more orderly. Queuing favours the traveller with time on his or her hands and is most unfair to the busy who cannot leave their work at four in order to catch a train at six. It would be quite as fair to suggest that the tallest or oldest or fattest should be fed as to suggest that the earliest on the platform should be so favoured.

Surely the answer is for the railway authorities to provide more meals. There can be no objection to this; it succeeds elsewhere. E. S. POWELL

MR. ELIOT AS THE WHITE KNIGHT?

SIR,—

"But I was thinking of a plan
To dye one's whiskers green,
And always use so large a fan
That they could not be seen."

Has not this policy something in common with the motive which Mr. Henry Reed ascribes to Mr. T. S. Eliot for rendering "*tornar*" by "turn" in an allusion to a poem by Cavalcanti? "I think we are pointedly meant to *avoid* Cavalcanti here," says Mr. Reed (italics his), "and that consciously or otherwise Mr. Eliot has chosen the way of mistranslation to tell us this."

The White Knight supplies another parallel in his reason for keeping a mouse-trap on his saddle. "It isn't very likely there would be any mice on the horse's back," says Alice. "Not very likely, perhaps," he replies, "but, if they *do* come, I don't choose to have them running all about."

86 Walton St., S.W.3. EDWARD MARSH

TOO MANY BABIES?

SIR,—Dr. Joad, usually so precise in his vocabulary, has fallen a victim to "inflation," with the result that he speaks of an "inflated population." If, however, he is using the word advisedly, does he imply that we have reached a situation in England in which too many babies are chasing too few fathers?

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

*Recollections of the Lake Poets** is the most varied and lively, the most recreational, of De Quincey's books. It has—what every De Quincey book needs—focal points outside, yet not too far outside, the writer's life. It has contentions: not too many and not too elaborate. It has a subject. If one assumes, as obviously one must, that the average reader is far more interested in Wordsworth and Coleridge than in De Quincey, here is the approach by which the little word-spinner can insinuate himself. And given a reader at all suggestible, insinuate himself he will.

Watch how he goes to work. His methods, his requirements are operatic. Scene, personages, music. The first, with trippers (even then on the prowl) invoked and summarily banished, is provided by a Lake District whose mountains and valleys, flowers, sequestered dwellings, hillside bells, far distances, abruptnesses, storms, mists, inn encounters, moony midnight flittings form more than a background or recurring topic; features, habitations, and names may have grown familiar, but the landscape we seem to know by sympathy *before* we set eyes on it. (De Quincey pretends, with his usual legerdemain, actually to have witnessed and lived this phase of his life by a sort of precognition.) For all its matter-of-fact geography it retains an earlier enchantment, as though we ourselves on a visit had explored at dawn, gone back to bed, and then spent the remainder of the day sight-seeing, inwardly touched by memory. Shapes of rock or cloud:

> This mimic church, however, has a peculiarly fine effect in this wild situation, which leaves so far below the tumults of this world: the phantom church, by suggesting the phantom and evanescent image of a congregation, where never congregation met; of the pealing organ, where never sound was heard except of wild natural notes, or else of the wind rushing through these mighty gates of everlasting rock—in this way the fanciful image that accompanies the traveller on his road, for half a mile or more, serves to bring out the antagonist feeling of intense and awful solitude, which is the natural and presiding sentiment—the *religio loci*—that broods for ever over the romantic pass.

Rare indeed in prose literature—as Mr. Sackville West quoting the above passage points out—is the verbal harmony and illumination of such passages.

One thinks not so much of poetry—Coleridge's or Keats's—as of music: here, to be more precise, of Berlioz. Scattered through half a dozen works of De Quincey containing much other matter will be found a whole Fantastic Symphony ("Scenes from the Life of the Artist"); pastoral beauty, love loss, terror of death—there they all are. It is the early summer of Romanticism, before either languor or perversity has crept in. Baudelaire, from a later date, fastening upon the masterpiece of this kindred spirit, delighted in the *innocence* of De Quincey's London adventures and his love for Ann. De Quincey was in love all his life. If we do not think of him so it is because his actual love affairs are so fugitive, his marriage so apparently connubial. But one can't sympathetically understand his *Recollections of the Lake Poets* without seeing—what is the simple truth—that he fell in love with the Lake District and its poets before venturing within a hundred miles of them. His clumsy but genuinely loving marriage with Margaret Simpson takes an oddly inconspicuous place in this reminiscence of the larger affair. Wordsworth and Coleridge—theirs was the magnetism; he found marriage within (as it were) their orbit, however much they might disapprove; and afterwards, in writing of them, he could never quite resist the touch of irritation with which the *faithful* lover returns to his memories. "Malice" I think far too strong a word for this irritability allied to a remarkable clear-sightedness. Does he make mild fun of Wordsworth's legs and describe his skating in terms of a "cow dancing a cotillon" on the ice? The whole of that high-spirited passage and the worship that has gone before must be taken into account. Does he labour Coleridge's habit as a poet of borrowing from all and sundry? Once again his facts are right, and the only fault in this case is a rather boring insistence. Besides he had once made Coleridge the gift of £500, a generosity of which neither Wordsworth nor Coleridge would in any circumstances have been capable.

His portraits of both men are unrivalled: to them in fact, the book owes such popularity as it retains. They are too generally known to require description, but the method is characteristic. They are built up, one might say, from a very few occasions, with anecdotes attached. The anecdotes also are built up in that comic suspended manner which De Quincey brilliantly invented as the counterpart of his poetic hallucinations. A few of them have passed into general currency. We all know the story of the short-sighted old clergyman who at dinner, seeing something white astray in his lap, proceeded to stuff it into his breeches; and went on stuffing; so that when the ladies on either side moved to retire, one of them found herself trainless and fast attached to her neighbour. It is the sort of anecdote that could hardly fail to survive. Old clergymen, more circumspect in their actions, retail it. But particularise—the "modest divine" in question was Coleridge's father; restore the verbal richness and equivocation that are De Quincey's and the fun grows enormously.

Besides the two poets whose Brobdingnagian presence, lightly if sufficiently clad in fact, broods over the chosen fells and dales, there are lesser personages: Dorothy Wordsworth (a remarkably living impression), Southey, Wilson, "poor" Lloyd, Miss Elizabeth Smith (the heroine of a wonderfully judged Gothic adventure), and in the forefront of local society a pair of literary sisters whose sincere condescension it was that they had never read a line of Wordsworth and were vaguely offended if they met him out visiting—their own drawing-room was of course barred to the ungainly revenue-officer. The whole final five-part essay ("Society of the Lakes") is as briskly populated as anything in the way of reminiscence De Quincey ever achieved. The incantations of place, of fated circumstance have been worked; the loved ones have walked and uttered; De Quincey himself has sung; and now, with the farewells taken, he applies his discursive mind to more everyday associations. His method, as always, is to elevate first impressions and out of one moment to blow the huge iridescent bubble that will either hang beautifully or as beautifully explode. He has also, when it comes to describing people, the near sharp eye of a preternaturally wise child.

Suspended moments! In greater or less degree they determine every characteristic of the essential De Quincey: style, supernatural arrest, addiction to dreams, humour, mode of living (the restlessness that betrays the rooted discord), everything. The inability to pass from one experience to the next begets an extraordinary musical development of the original experience. *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* is such a development, and in the early chapters of the *Autobiographic Sketches* will be found the deciding motif of the later hallucination. The sequence of deaths that made him exclaim, a child of six, "Life is finished! Life is finished!" imprinted itself in a sort of vivid catalepsy as he stood gazing out at a summer landscape by the death-bed where his sister lay. A hollow wind arose—"the saddest that ear ever heard. It was a wind that might have swept the fields of mortality for a thousand centuries." The whole scene provides one of De Quincey's most famous passages, but I shall quote again its conclusion because the reiteration of a few passages is, finally, our experience of De Quincey, and for the sake of a comparison.

> . . . Many times since, upon summer days, when the sun is about the hottest, I have remarked the same wind rising and uttering the same hollow, solemn, Memnonian but saintly swell; it is in this world the one great audible symbol of eternity. And three times in my life have I happened to hear the same sound in the same circumstances—viz., when standing between an open window and a dead body on a summer day.
>
> Instantly, when my ear caught this vast Aeonian intonation, when my eye filled with the golden fullness of life, the pomps of the heavens above, or the glory of the flowers below, and turning when it settled upon the frost which overspread my sister's face, instantly a trance fell upon me. A vault seemed to open in the zenith of the far blue sky, a shaft which ran up for ever. I, in spirit, rose as if on billows that also ran up the shaft for ever; and the billows seemed to pursue the throne of God; but *that* also ran before us and fled away continually. The flight and the pursuit seemed to go on for ever and ever. Frost gathering frost, some Sarsar wind of death, seemed to repel me; some mighty relation between God and death dimly struggled to evolve itself from the dreadful antagonism between them; shadowy meanings even yet continue to exercise and torment, in dreams, the deciphering oracle within me. I slept—for how long I cannot say, slowly I recovered my self-possession; and, when I woke, found myself standing, as before, close to my father's bed.

Only one other passage in literature that I know conveys this huge impact of the single revelation that fixes experience and will reverberate through a lifetime: Dostoievsky's two minutes in face of the firing squad. For him every second was divided by hundreds into instants of greedy living—birds singing in the tree over his head, the officer smoking a cigarette, windows being opened, men going by to work, and so on; afterwards in the Siberia that followed reprieve began those epileptic attacks prefigured always by the sense of vision and power. Dostoievsky himself called them revelations, and these recurrent frenzies were as integral a part of his life-struggle as were De Quincey's comas and somnambulisms in a world of shadows. Death came to the one, life to the other, in a flash.

The essential De Quincey whom I have been describing exists only—can perhaps only exist—in a very few works, and fragmentarily among others. A lifetime of writing for the periodicals has obscured him. Between him and us stand his Collected Works: fourteen old battle-red, small-print volumes in the Masson edition. Who is going to engage them? How can we, victims of the journalistic short-cut, return to an age when journalism took the long—the irretrievably winding—way round? For, start almost anywhere in those six thousand pages, and very soon one finds oneself lost, knee-deep, nose-high, in the larger sensationalism of a century ago. Larger it certainly is, less short-lived than our own; the past as well as the present, currents of thought and poetry as well as the public scare, learning as well as snobbery distinguish the monthly sheet. But a particular class of reader—no, not even that, a *public*—has been addressed, and that public is not ourselves. We haven't subscribed; we pore over shoulders long dead. That mysterious defunct reader—(in what sense was he ever alive?)—remains to shadow and obscure every page designed journalistically.

So, on my shelves as on others', those fourteen volumes lose colour and gather dust. What is to be done about them? They can't in general be read through. I never look their way without a pang. De Quincey! Ann! Oxford Street. There are, however, ways of enlarging the poetry and investigating the journalism. We must all feel that De Quincey needs some sort of modern tutelage if he is to be read as he deserves; and who better can provide it than Mr. Sackville West? Not only is his life of De Quincey (*A Flame in Sunlight*, Cassell, 1936) the most sympathetic and just appraisal of its subject I have read, but he made then a proposal which might well to-day be carried out. This is to reprint the *Confessions* in the original first edition, published before De Quincey himself had the chance of stringing them out with extraneous matter. I agree with Mr. Sackville West that its effect would startle even admirers. In essence, if not by and large, he is among the great writers.

G. W. STONIER

* *Recollections of the Lake Poets.* By Thomas De Quincey. Edited with an Introduction by Edward Sackville West. Lehmann. 8*s.* 6*d.*

PROUDHON

The Un-Marxian Socialist: A Study of Proudhon. By HENRI DE LUBAC, S.J. Translated by Canon R. E. Scantlebury. *Sheed and Ward.* 16s.

With the exception of Communism and ultra-montane Catholicism, every major political movement in France during the last century has felt the fascination of Proudhon. Too full of contradictions, too violent in statement, too unpredictable in action ever to become the leader of a school of thought in his own day (if he had wanted to, which he didn't), Proudhon has resisted even after his death the efforts of enthusiastic disciples to prune his work as Fourier's successors pruned his, or to amplify and arrange it as the Saint-Simonians did for their master. Instead, he furnished inspiration to a dozen movements, ranging from Anarchism to Royalism and Vichyism. Interest in him waned from the late 1870's onwards, but revived, towards the end of the century, under the influence of the factors that created the revisionist movement inside Marxism, and from then onwards the spate of Proudhonian literature in France has rivalled even the Marxist flow. When a group of forward-looking Catholic thinkers began to form itself around the review *Esprit* during the decade before the war, they, too, returned again and again to the discussion of Proudhon, and it was no doubt inevitable that one of their number should produce a full-dress work on him. This duly appeared early in 1945, and the present volume is an English translation of it.

Proudhon always constituted a problem for French Catholics. There was much in his doctrine that was attractive to them—his patriarchal attitude to the family, his pathological anti-feminism, his views on poverty and work and divorce—and there were times when he was ready to work with the Church. His proclamation that "God is Evil" and similar outbursts were less serious obstacles to co-operation than might be thought: French Catholicism has more than once allied itself even with atheism, and Proudhon was no more than an agnostic. The real obstacle was his denunciations of private property, and if a closer study of his work revealed him to be less of a revolutionary on this point than was at first apparent, it also brought to light a tenacious and fundamentally religious moral immanentism, that made Proudhon a more dangerous enemy than Voltaire.

It is to this aspect of Proudhon that the Abbé de Lubac addresses himself. Proudhon's works run into nearly 70 titles, plus 14 volumes of correspondence, and M. de Lubac has all but learned them by heart. He tries in the main to do three things: to disentangle the superficial inconsistencies from the fundamental consistency of Proudhon's philosophy and theology, to reply to him and to warn his fellow-Catholics, by implication, never again to drive so good a man into going so wrong. He may seem to us a little naive when he seeks, at some length, the "explanation" of the anti-clericalism of a Republican who in his boyhood had seen Catholicism turned into defence of privilege by de Maistre and Bonald, in his early manhood had watched its fight for a monopoly of education and, in his mature years, had seen the Church greedily seize the opportunity of becoming the rallying point for every kind of reaction (including atheist), but the Abbé uses the argument to get in some telling blows against traditionalism and ultra-montanism. His whole inquiry is conducted with sympathy, objectivity and a real sense of scholarship.

All that made the Abbé de Lubac's book a valuable addition to the literature of Proudhon. But the English translation is another matter. To begin with, it is a bad translation. Proudhon's flooding argument, his accumulation of invective and autodidactic weakness for display of quotation and vocabulary all make him one of the half-dozen French writers most difficult to translate. Canon Scantlebury makes a brave shot at the many extracts from him, but almost invariably reduces Proudhon's muscular, combative and withal measured prose to a series of stilted, clod-hopping jerks. In addition, there are quite a lot of real howlers. *La vie de cité* does not mean "town-life," nor is *un homme d'esprit* "a man with a sense of humour." *Incessamment* often means "immediately," *inédit* merely "original"—and there are too many points like these on which Canon Scantlebury's dictionary fails him. His unfamiliarity with his subject makes some of his amplifications and explanatory footnotes positively misleading, as when he confuses the *Confessions* of Rousseau with those of St. Augustine, or the *Montagne* of the second Republic with that of the first.

There is, however, a more serious reason for advising the English reader not to regard this book as a reliable guide to Proudhon. The original is entitled *Proudhon et le Christianisme*, and it keeps to the very limited field indicated by its title. The translation has the title given above, and its dust-cover claims it as "an objective account of Proudhon's social, political and philosophic doctrines." This claim cannot be justified. There are two and a half pages on Proudhon's mutualism, nothing on his economic and credit theories, nothing on his federalism, nothing on his syndicalism, his dislike of the State, his preaching of working-class action, though these are the sources of his fame and influence. Proudhon's attempts to become a theologian and philosopher belong to the period of his literary apprenticeship, and though he never lost interest in theology and never ceased his search for the philosophic bases of his own attitudes, his primary interests always lay elsewhere, and he made no attempt to publish his later writings on these subjects. So the Abbé de Lubac's researches are based largely on three early and half a dozen posthumous works. The one really important work to be properly examined is the great *Justice dans Révolution et dans l'Église*, which, if it is Proudhon at his maturest and most eloquent, is still very far from being a sufficient guide to his work.

Serious students of Proudhon will already have read M. de Lubac's book in French—at half the price. Those who can't will have to fall back on Professor Brogan's excellent but too brief study, or wait for a longer and more definitive work.

W. PICKLES

SHORT STORIES

Something Terrible Something Lovely. By WILLIAM SANSOM. *Hogarth Press.* 8s. 6d.
Collected Short Stories. By E. M. FORSTER. *Sidgwick and Jackson.* 10s. 6d.

How well Mr. Sansom writes! That is the accepted, and indeed the necessary starting-point for any criticism of his work. How well he manœuvres his words and what good words he discovers! Linguistically there is hardly a dull moment in the whole of this volume. Sentence follows sentence like a succession of bright, noisy yet harmonious fireworks. The tension is seldom relaxed, and each story is taut, braced, vertebrate from start to finish. The pains he has taken are, of course, perceptible; this is a highly self-conscious writer and the skill of his achievement enters, at times too importunately, into the total impression which the reader receives. Examine, for example, the opening sentences of his stories—

> The day slate-dark, the air still, the cinder track by the cottages empty and without life in a watered, middle-day light—and young Nita came running running home from school . . . .

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Have you watched time eating at a place? The bearded jaws tearing unseen at the air of a still room . . . ?

As he felt the first watery eggs of sweat moistening the palms of his hands, as with every rung higher his body seemed to weigh more heavily, this young man Flegg . . . .

It was one day when I visited the coffee bar that such a strange thing happened . . . .

It may have been only to the outsider of short acquaintance that Craven and his wife Dodo in their desuetude appeared more than usually destined for rapid extinction . . . .

In each of these openings there is a loud verbal firework. There is the repetition of the word "running" in the first; there is the interrogation of the second; in the third and the fourth there are the strange forced simplicities of the phrases "this young man Flegg" and "such a strange thing"; in the fifth quotation the word "desuetude" explodes noisily in eye and ear. These devices are felicitous, and it may seem ungracious to protest that they are too ostentatious. What is the unfortunate contemporary writer to do? If he writes flatly he is reproached for his lack of distinction. If he writes with vigour and originality he is accused of diverting the readers attention from matter to manner. Yet in Mr. Sansom's case there is, I believe, a solution. The plain fact is that he is not a short-story writer; he is a prose poet. By calling himself a story-writer he induced us unduly to preoccupy ourselves with his matter, or rather to preoccupy ourselves with the wrong matter, with the total statement of each story instead of with the total statement of each sentence or paragraph. When we remove the magnifying glass from his work, when we close the book and attempt to contemplate the totality of his thought, to grasp, as it were, his *idea*, we find him curiously inapprehensible. We are obliged to turn back to the paragraph, the sentence, the word, where we instantly rediscover the writer's motive and justification for writing.

It would seem that Mr. Sansom has already more than half understood the nature of his remarkable talent. In his earlier stories he wrote in imitation of Kafka and their weakness was due to the inadequacy of his larger ideas. There was no object in continuing to say something ordinary in an extraordinary way. Kafka wrote as he did because what he had to say was remarkable, and there was no other way of saying it. His was a macrocosmic genius and his total statement remains forever in the mind of his readers. But Mr. Sansom appears to have discovered that he is not a man of prose ideas. He has concentrated his talent, forced more and more of his unquestionable creative energy into the smaller prose units. But he has not yet gone far enough. The burden of some total meaning is still carried by the more ambitious of his stories, and this total meaning is both inadequate and superfluous. In, for example, a story called *Crabfroth* an elaborate technical apparatus is brought into play for the purpose of explaining that unhappiness is as necessary to man as is contentment. Nor is this statement made with any new subtlety, with any intellectual elaboration or in a new and memorable emotional atmosphere. Yet within this story there is a description of sunflowers on a summer afternoon which is an exquisite poem in its own right. It might be, of course, that the sunflowers contributed to the total statement; that their poetry was involved in the poetical expression of an old but valuable truth. But this is not the case. There is the statement of the story, somewhat wooden, somewhat pretentious and over-elaborate, and there are the sunflowers, richly and evocatively described. Thus it is that the best piece of prose in this book is not, despite the blurb, the strained and inarticulate story called *How Claeys Died*, but a lovely little fragment of lyrical imagination called *A Saving Grace*. In this Mr. Sansom describes the appearance of a group of Edwardian ghosts on a summer lawn; the ghost of a circus clown bewilderingly appears to dance and tumble for their entertainment; they are pleased; they vanish. There is no "statement" to be discovered here. From start to finish we are on that poetic plane which may be recognised by our surrender of all search for paraphrase. In suggesting that Mr. Sansom should finally abandon all aspiration after a prose statement one is not warning him off a more difficult and distinguished territory. Quite the contrary. Very few writers of our time have either his intensity of perception or his felicity of expression. Prose-poets are much rarer than story-tellers.

Re-reading Mr. Forster's stories one can hardly doubt that his talent is no more suited to this medium than Mr. Sansom's; but for precisely the opposite reason. None would ever suggest that Mr. Forster has no general statement to make. His assault on what Mr. Trilling has called "the undeveloped heart" is explicit in nearly everything that he has ever written. His pagan adoration of life and energy, his passionate plea for love, for freedom, for "connection" has moved and influenced two generations. But it is a statement which requires a certain spaciousness for its full and proper development. Abbreviated it becomes questionably simple, even obviously false, even, at its worst, a little bit whimsical and fey. These fauns and dryads seem too easy a device for protesting against faults which we have already learned, with the help of Mr. Forster's novels, to recognise and to abhor. In these abbreviated simplicities he is even capable of flat contradiction. In one story he demonstrates the tediousness of all conventional heavens, the *exhaustible* nature of the pleasures provided by Christian harp or by Mohammedan damsels. Elsewhere he provides a heaven of his own, a garden of lotus-eaters to which the wise escape from the dusty road where the foolish continue to strive and contend. "Give me life," say the foolish, "with its struggles and victories, with its failures and hatreds, with its deep moral meaning and its unknown goal." Many who conceived themselves to be with the wise in *Howard's End* or *The Longest Journey*, may find themselves here among the foolish.

PHILIP TOYNBEE.

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century conditions. He wants a West European grouping powerful enough to maintain its independence of both the United States and the Soviet Union, while doing its best to keep up friendly intercourse with both. Such a grouping, he holds, cannot be created except under a constitution close enough to unite the States of Western Europe irrevocably and to commit to a federal legislature resting on popular election the final control, not only of armaments and of foreign policy, but also of currency, of commercial policy, and of economic planning for development. His idea of federation also includes complete freedom of migration within the federal area and the guaranteeing of democratic rights and personal liberties in accordance with Western liberal traditions.

All this is plainly a tall order. If it could be done, and could be worked effectively, with the colonies of the European States and with the Dominions tacked on as suppliers of foodstuffs and materials and as markets, most of the excellent results Mr. Mackay promises would certainly follow. The economic case for European unity (aided by the adhesion of sufficient extra-European primary producing areas) is very strong. But Mr. Mackay, with the eloquence of the advocate, leaps pretty lightly over the difficulties. Are the peoples of Western Europe—is the people of Great Britain—prepared to pass over to a West European Parliament the power to settle monetary and economic policy by a majority vote of the members? Will the British Dominions, even excluding Canada, transfer to a West European Federation their traditional connection with Great Britain? And in that event what becomes of the Imperial Crown? Can a single legislature made up of representatives from many nations really take on the job of legislating over the whole field of economic planning and of trade and monetary policy without any intervening stage of more limited co-operation? Can Socialists and capitalists from all Western Europe really sit down in a common Cabinet to plan economic and social legislation; or, alternatively, can the party which wins an overall majority, if any does, at the European federal election really set up a party government empowered to frame the policy for the whole area, including those States in which parties with very different policies are in power? To tell us that the thing was done in the United States within a few years of the Declaration of Independence is no answer to these questions. The States spoke a common language and derived from a common system of colonial rule, and their inhabitants were largely, at that stage, of common political and social origin.

Of course, I realise that these objections, however weighty, do not get away from the need for West European unity. Somehow, this unity must be achieved, if a different sort of unity is not to be forced on the West by the victory of Communism—with or without a third World War. I am by no means desirous of picking holes in Mr. Mackay's enthusiasm; but he himself appeals for "realism," and I am compelled to deny that his notion of the immediate establishment of the sort of federation he advocates is realistic. Nor is he realistic when he speaks as if such a federation, set up now, could rest on a basis of Socialism, which he regards as the only sound economic basis for it. West European Socialism, with the Communists in opposition, is not powerful enough at present to win a majority in a popularly elected federal First Chamber, or to dominate the proposed Second Chamber based on representation of the federated States. Perhaps it may be, some day, if fortune favours it and its leaders play their cards well; but it must be admitted that there is little sign of such a situation in prospect. A West European Federal Government would have, for the present, to rest either on a coalition of Socialist and capitalist—mainly Catholic—parties, or on a capitalist coalition with the Socialists left out. Could either of these types of Government plan and execute the policy which Mr. Mackay demands?

I should hate to end this review with a mere negation. So much that Mr. Mackay has to say is eminently sane and right. The approach cannot be as direct as he suggests. My own view is that the political problem is too intractable to be approached at present except *via* the economic. Let us get as far as we can not only towards a Customs and Monetary Union, but also towards planned unification of economic development policies, combined purchase and export arrangements with countries outside Western Europe, including the Dominions, combined measures of colonial economic development, and easy migration on terms which will allow migrants to acquire civic rights and claims to social services in the States to which they move. If we begin in these ways, a common Parliament with sufficient powers may come much more easily than it can now, and perhaps with more prospect of a Socialist majority. I am not saying that we should go slow, but that we should go as fast as we can along the roads that are not impenetrably blocked.

G. D. H. COLE

CONCENTRATION CAMP

Three Came Home. By AGNES KEITH. *Michael Joseph.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

This is the terrible sequel to *Land Below the Wind*, a book which brought off the extremely difficult feat of conveying happiness, blissful happiness, without being in the least mawkish. The heart of the thing was its complete honesty, there was nothing false in the book at all, nothing secret or shameful was being withheld. Mrs. Keith is in fact the nearest thing to one of Whitman's:

> superb, large size, emotional and physically perfect individualities

that one is likely to encounter in life or letters, and it is incredible that she would ever conceal anything. There was indeed nothing to conceal in the first book which described her first five years in Borneo; she was in her own words:

> doing what I would rather be doing than anything else in the world, with the person I'd rather be doing it with.

But that took her life up to 1939; this book describes what happened after the Japanese reached Borneo in 1941 and she was separated from her husband and taken with her infant son to a prison camp.

Shame crowds in, the shame of being helpless and being defeated, the shame of being unable to resent being slapped and spat at, the shame of being betrayed by one's own body: she was hauled out of the sickbed where she lay shaking off an attack of malaria for an interrogation and crept back into it, bruised and beaten, to have a miscarriage. Then back to the daily business of trying to bury the camp's faeces under the few inches of soil overlying the uncompromising rock, and to the agonising strain of the children:

> They became nauseated, had diarrhoea, passed mucus and blood, and lay about the barrack very limply. Most of them were past the napkin age, and we had no provision for stopping the wet ends. The camp became a trail of bloody stools left in the wake of weeping children, who in their turn were followed by creeping infants who crawled through mud and gore . . . .

In the end Mrs. Keith suffered a brutal attempt at rape by a Japanese soldier and found the real depth she had reached: when she complained to the Officer in Charge she was beaten and ill-used for slandering the Japanese Army, and it was conveyed to her by the attitude of her fellow prisoners that she had been wrong to complain—it only made things more difficult for them. The camp method of degrading human beings

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had succeeded to the full, and any manifestation of self-respect had become anti-social.

But this is not just a visit to the Jean-Paul Sartre country by another route; there is an important difference. Mrs. Keith cannot accept the situation as the human situation, or even an allegory of its essence. Civilians come to the wire of the camp at night and give the prisoners food at the risk of their own lives, and sometimes at the cost of their lives. In the extreme of misery on the deck of a ship during a transfer from one island camp to another a Japanese soldier walks across the decks, awash with rain, sea, urine and vomit, and slips a note into Mrs. Keith's hand:

> "I present you ten dollars which is my salary. That is a few money. I am regrettable not to be able to give you enough money because I am a soldier. Please don't fear. Take this money . . ."

and the prisoners themselves continually recover, find a footing in the slime, and behave well without calculation or ulterior motive: virtue keeps breaking in. In the worst of her misery Mrs. Keith remains convinced that men are not by nature bad although they can be warped out of all recognition by evil codes, and her portraits of the Japanese soldiers who used her worst are warmed by a recognition of the virtue in them. They are men degraded and defiled by war. And when at the end of the book it comes to recording their fates it is clear that she has been hurt beyond bearing by the fact that the vengeance taken on them by the men who fought to set her free was as senseless and brutal as the worst of their crimes.

There are those who take a perverse pleasure in ignoring the strength and virtue in American liberalism, and in concentrating their minds on the points of breakdown and failure which American liberals so ruthlessly expose in their fight for a better country and a better world. It is to be hoped they will read this book, which is a magnificent statement of Whitmanesque idealism, and a proof of its power to sustain men through the worst that can well happen to them.

ANTHONY WEST

Horizon. Edited by CYRIL CONNOLLY. 2*s.* 6*d.*

With the April issue we can congratulate *Horizon* on reaching its century "not out" (and with no intention as yet of throwing away its wicket). This not inconsiderable feat has been brought off, too, on a notoriously bad pitch: for throughout its life *Horizon* has been unflinchingly, aggressively, even at times maddeningly, highbrow. There are other magazines, monthlies, quarterlies, miscellanies, more established, more sober, better known; but *Horizon* has won for itself a special place. It has lived at the centre of the confusions of our times, and has, alike in its weakness and strength, reflected sensitively and accurately the mad movements of the contemporary barometer. In his far too brief comments, the editor has expressed, with a frankness few of his contemporaries would dare, the mixture of arrogance, self-pity, contempt, nostalgia and pride in his calling that are the marks of the intellectual to-day. Editorially he has been admirably courageous; he has brought off some brilliant coups of which the publication of Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One* as a complete issue was only the most notable. In this issue the editor justly acknowledges the debt *Horizon* and its readers owe to the generosity of its proprietor, Mr. Peter Watson.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

I HAVE lately received a complaint that I am apt to leave some issues too long unreviewed. Apart from the pressure on space in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, there is a constant reason why I cannot avoid this. Nowadays records hardly ever reach me before the date of publication, and frequently ten days or a fortnight after it. Readers are therefore entreated to be patient and not to assume, because some important issue is not immediately noticed, that I have simply ignored it.

MEDTNER SOCIETY: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor* (Nicolas Medtner with Philharmonia Orch. (Dobrowen); *Fairy Tales* in D minor, op. 51 No. 1. Op. 26, 3. *Arabesque* op. 7, 2. Songs: *To a Dreamer* op. 32, 6 (Oda Slobodskaya); *Spanish Romance*, op. 52, 5; *The Butterfly*, op. 28, 3 (Tatiana Makushina). Seven H.M.V. DB records.) This issue proudly justifies the Maharajah of Mysore's liberality. Only *carte blanche* could have produced a performance as completely rehearsed as that of the Concerto, which is among the very best records of our time (I have never heard the Philharmonia orchestra play better). This composer's debt to Rachmaninoff—in this work as elsewhere—is undisguised, but need not be deplored, for it covers externals only. Medtner, the neglect of whose music is difficult to understand, expresses himself in the late romantic idiom, but his thoughts are very much his own. This concerto, and the big, tragic song, *To a Dreamer*, give pretty well the scope of his imagination, which gains in depth what it lacks in breadth. As a composer for the piano Medtner is a master of invention, superior in resourcefulness even to Rachmaninoff, since he is the better contrapuntist of the two. While Rachmaninoff's fugatos (i.e., in the Finale of the Third Symphony) strike one as so much academic padding, Medtner's themes are usually contrived so as to develop naturally, at some point or other, into contrapuntal expatiation. The solo pieces will probably be more worthily represented in later volumes of the society, for the three contained in this one, although beautifully written and perfectly played, are, I think, inferior in musical interest to much of Medtner's output. Mme Slobodskaya's singing of *To a Dreamer* is admirable in style and tone. Mme Makushina's voice, on the other hand, is less happily recorded. It should not escape notice that Medtner the pianist is an artist of great refinement as well as a first-class virtuoso. His power, clarity, and range of tone in these records will be a source of continual delight to connoisseurs of pianistic subtlety.

BRITTEN: *The Rape of Lucretia* (Pears, Cross, Lumsden, Dowling, Sharp, Evans, Nielsen, Ritchie, with Chamber Orch. (Goodall). H.M.V. C3699-706). On the whole probably as good a job as should be expected. The singers are sometimes (especially at the beginning) placed too near the mike, so that they swamp the fine-drawn instrumental scoring. The scene of the rape, and the ensuing chorale, needed more careful recording, for the texture of both is deliberately harsh and bare. In the result the ear is over-strained. The cuts have been wisely chosen, save in two instances. There is not a bar of the "thirsty evening" music in act I, scene 1; nor yet of Tarquin's brief but passionate address to the sleeping Lucretia. These omissions are grievous: the first because it deprives the opening scene of all atmosphere and reduces the impression to one of almost unrelieved recitative; the second because it leaves us without the right preparation for the whip-crack of Lucretia's terrified awakening. Only one extra disc—two sides—and we should have had no possible cause for complaint. Even so, the ship cannot be considered as spoiled: though the balance is seldom wholly satisfactory, the singing is admirable (of the various casts the best has been chosen) and the recording is mostly very good. This peculiar and very beautiful little opera is, of course, ideally suited to intimate listening. The nobility of the final scene can be more thoroughly fathomed without the rather inept stage picture.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 2 in D major* (Orch. de la Suisse Romande (Schuricht) Decca K1610-13). A most satisfactory set, beautifully recorded, conducted with taste and precision, and with an appreciation of the special beauties of this matutinal work which put us in love with it all over again. Highly recommended as now the best available set.

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Orch. (Süsskind) Col. DX1462-6). Regretfully, since I admire his sensitive and individual talent, I conclude, after hearing these records, that Denis Matthews is not built on lines robust enough to control the prodigious mechanics of this concerto. It is true that in the Adagio he plays with most delicate perception and beautifully graded tone (the semi-quaver figure which accompanies the main theme on its return, is carried through perfectly). But in the first movement one feels that his capacities are stretched to their limit—an impression that is always disastrous to pleasure. The soloist seems to be pulling back the orchestra, which gives a noble performance; in fortissimo his tone becomes unsteady, and abuse of the sustaining pedal fogs some of the passage-work. The announcement of the Rondo theme is muffed—as it nearly always is!—and the movement as a whole is taken too slowly. It should rise like an aeroplane and then fly steadily along till it is time to land on the timpani run-way at the end. There is much in this set to admire, including the recording; but readers are advised to stick, for the present, to the Gieseking set.

BEETHOVEN: *Violin Concerto* (Yehudi Menuhin, with Lucerne Festival Orch. (Furtwängler). H.M.V. DB6574-8 and DBS6579). A perfectly safe, musicianly, but not at all inspired performance by the soloist. The orchestral part is beautiful in tone and well balanced with the solo; but it is impossible to avoid noticing Furtwängler's inveterate and curiously vulgar trick of hurrying up in loud passages and slowing down in soft, regardless of other considerations. The recording is agreeably resonant. A good "interim" set, but not—as an interpretation—on a level with Kreisler's.

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 4 in E minor* (N.S.O. (Rankl). Decca K1231-5). In many respects a worthy conception of this noble work seems to lie at the back of a rather dull, slack performance. For a careful modern rendering I still recommend Karl Böhm's set, although the recording now seems a little old-fashioned and boxy. Böhm does at least take the Andante at a pace which brings out its tragic quality, whereas Dr. Rankl's light-hearted Andantino (to some extent sanctioned, it must be admitted, by Weingartner himself) seems to me to make nonsense of the movement. Throughout the new performance the instrumental entries are none too precise, and the violin tone is consistently unpleasant.

STRAUSS: *Ein Heldenleben* (R.P.O. (Beecham). H.M.V. DB6620-4). An issue to be received with bunting and a red carpet. It was to be expected that Sir Thomas would surpass himself on this occasion; but in the case of a work which holds so many traps for the unwary engineer, a perfect recording did not seem so certain. Yet I dare to affirm that this one is virtually flawless. It handles the whole of Strauss's complex and burdensome score with apparent ease, and brings even the noisiest passages right up to the ear without hurting it. A most eloquent and convincing performance, which imposes the work as a masterpiece of romantic art.

ELGAR: *Enigma Variations* (Hallé Orch. (Barbirolli). H.M.V. C3692-5). *Ditto* (N.S.O. (Sargent). Decca K1351-4). The first of these issues is most disappointing—especially after Mr. Barbirolli's splendid set of the *Introduction and Allegro*. The *Variations* are polished off in a rough and ready fashion which does no justice to the many "psychological" subtleties of this music, and which deprives the instrumentation of its dovetailed neatness and aptitude. If you don't believe me, compare the "Dorabella" of this issue with that of any former one. Dr. Sargent's set is far more satisfactory, both in detail and in general conception. Some of the playing is rather limp—an unexpected fault to find in anything conducted by Dr. Sargent; but although I still prefer Sir Adrian Boult's performance, for vigour and for refinement of interpretation, I must admit that the Decca recording deals more successfully with the elaborate orchestral texture.

STRAVINSKY: *Le Sacre du Printemps* (Concertgebouw Orch. (Van Beinum). Decca K1727-30). An outstanding issue. It is thrilling to be able to recognise every detail of this eccentric, yet wonderfully clever and successful score. How anodyne most of the harmony sounds, when compared with that of the Symphony in Three Movements! At this distance of time we can see that the *Sacre* is musically much nearer to *L'Oiseau de Feu* than listeners to the first performance could possibly realise. In the wilder sections Van Beinum's beat lacks nervous intensity; but the care and balance of his reading more than compensate for this defect. This is not music for every day, but as an occasional experience it continues to be strangely exciting and mysterious.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 39 in E flat* (K.543) (N.S.O. (Goehr) Decca K1236-8). A crisp, authoritative performance, except in the Minuet, which is just too slow for grace. The recording is rather heavy and inclined to overload. There is at present no very satisfactory set of this symphony, since the Beecham one is also disagreeably harsh in the string department. Of the two I prefer the more recent.

MOZART: *The Impresario*—Overture; *Idomeneo*—Overture (N.S.O. (Boyd Neel). Decca K1410). A very sensible issue. Mozart enthusiasts will be glad to kill both birds with one stone. These little overtures are mature examples, the one of the serious poet, the other of the man who loved a joke. The performance is excellent, the recording marred only by a slight boom.

MENDELSSOHN: *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Nocturne, Scherzo,* and *Intermezzo* (Concertgebouw Orch. (Van Beinum). Decca K1768-9). A very well-made recording. Readers' attention is especially drawn to the inclusion of the *Intermezzo*, a delightful piece, scarcely ever heard, in the composer's most light-fingered style. Highly recommended on all counts.

LISZT: *Les Préludes* (Philadelphia Orch. (Ormandy). Col. LX1052-3). Reasons for hating this work are sufficiently obvious, and not all of them lie on the surface. I don't say there are no felicitous moments, only that the piece is by turns sugary and pompous (and finally both together). The new recording is good average, with some delicate woodwind playing that is above the level of ordinary competence; but the performance is not such as to make us forget the triviality of the music.

GRIEG: *Lyric Suite op. 54* (N.S.O. (Sargent). Decca K1412-2). Very slightly superior to the Columbia set. Dr. Sargent's conduct of the Dance and March is tauter than Basil Cameron's, and the higher recording level makes for greater realism of tone-colour. But the difference between the two issues is small, and those who already possess the Columbia set will not miss much by holding on to it.

STRAUSS (JOHANN): *Blue Danube Waltz* (N.S.O. (Krips). Decca K1723). Wonderful what an Austrian conductor can do in the way of inducing an English orchestra to play a Viennese waltz with the proper lilt! Szell's performance (H.M.V.) is, of course, the best of all, and the recording is still good; but those who want the very latest thing, may prefer the new version, which is capably recorded.

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(To be Concluded.)

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PHILOSOPHY

The Journal of the British Institute of Philosophy

Vol. XXIII No. 85

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Week-end Competitions

No. 948

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An Imaginary miscellany (*Turnpike Junior*) is to be compiled from the juvenilia of twentieth-century writers. Competitors are asked to submit plausible extracts, verse or prose. Limit 12 lines or 150 words. Entries by April 27.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 945

Set by Sebastian

The usual prizes are offered for a Chestertonian poem on the Nationalisation of Gas. Twelve lines.

Report by Sebastian

I award myself a prize for setting this competition; gas was the ideal subject for Chesterton, the entry was large, the standard spirited and high. I could have selected twenty clear winners, adepts in the mystical wallop of the master, who (had he known it) was one of the greatest writers of polemical advertising copy in his time. Lakon had all the topographical ingredients:

Gasometers at Lewisham
Are jolly fat and round
Let honest men replenish them
The blessèd saints shall cherish them,
We'll garland and embellish them,
Their praises shall resound.
The gas-filled towers of Lewisham
Belong to me and you,
And so do those at Amersham,
At Reading, Staines and Caversham
At Manchester and Faversham,
And that great one at Kew.

But there were T. E. Casson, S. W. Hyde, D. Thorp, L. G. Udall, Yorick, J. R. Till, Snomis, R, Allan M. Laing and many others all as good. It was remarkable how Chesterton lent his exuberance with equal effectiveness to Socialists and anti-Socialists. L. E. J., as usual, was brilliant and original. He has a first prize of two guineas; and to Stanley Sharpless, Hassall Pitman, Allan M. Laing, E. W. Fordham and Lakón I give sixteen shillings apiece.

Bob Boyle was son to the Earl of Cork, and he
wasn't a gilded ass,
But a jolly Christian gentleman who went in strong
for gas,
And he found a Law which God set up,—and a pity
it is he's dead,
For if Bob had spoken in Parliament we know what
he'd have said:
"You may rationalize and nationalize, but whenever
you come to measure
You'll find the volume varying inversely with the
pressure!"
When Boyle was dead a hundred years, then up spoke
Gay-Lussac:
"When gases begin expanding, I don't care which
I back,
"For they all expand alike," quoth he, "at O degrees
of C.,
"In the latitude where Paris is, at the level of the sea.
"You may rationalize or nationalize, but you'll
never be able to strike
"At the Will of God (be it never so odd) that all gases
expand alike!"
L. E. J.

On bank and mine and rail advance the bureaucratic
hordes,
But gas shall send them reeling back, for gas it is the
Lord's;
With rush and roar it first came down in Pentecostal
flame,
A leaping thing, a laughing thing, such as no man
can tame;
And we shall sigh a bitter sigh and squirm an awful
squirm,
To have to touch our forelocks to Administrator Therm
Poor Fanny's gaslight features grow ash-pale with
sense of doom,
And suicides at oven doors are plunged in sullen gloom,
The lamplighter and meter-man fall on their knees
and pray
That none of them shall live to see the shame of vesting
day.
God save our Sunday dinners from the universal thrall
Of the gas-men of Westminster and the yes-men
of Whitehall.
STANLEY SHARPLESS

The forests buried in the earth a million years ago
Locked up the light of glowing Suns in secret veins
below
Till mighty minds of mighty men possessed them
of the key,
Flung open wide the dungeon doors and set the
sunlight free.
Deep down the pioneers did probe. Deep down
within the mass
From its primeval prison rose the Genius of Gas.
But soon the fat directors came, the stags and bulls
and bears,
The heritage of all mankind they bought and sold as
theirs,
Theirs was the profit of the toil in deep Plutonian night,
Until the Nation rose in wrath and claimed a Nation's
right,
And now the enlightened people own and greet
with pride the glow
Of light which shone on Earth for them a million
years ago.
HASSALL PITMAN

Old Noah he sits in an English Inn with a flagon of
English ale,
And little he recks of the rasping rain and the rush of
the roaring gale;
But the laughter dies, and the songs are hushed when
a smug politician begins
To groan of the Government grabbing the gas,
and their other enormous sins.
Then Noah he thumps on the table and shouts in a
voice to awaken the dead,
"I don't care where the gas may go if it doesn't
get into my head."
"Good fellowship lives whatever the light—come fill
up the flagons again—
"The only gas that is dirty and dim is the gas of the
Parliament men.
"They may nationalise the sun," says he, "and the
moon and Aurora's ring,
"But the sons of God shall shout for joy while the
morning stars still sing.
"Gas ovens are made for the millionaires who dare
not die in bed,
"But I don't care where the gas may go if it doesn't
get into my head."
E. W. FORDHAM

Old Clement he had a Parliament plan, with Acts of
the widest scope:
He lassoed private enterprise with a length of majority
rope;
And the line he took was a very strong line, and the
hook he used was hope;
But the Tories talked of the Gadarene swine, and sang
of the slippery slope,
While Churchill he often said to his pals, when a Bill
was due to pass:
"I don't care much what the Socialists do if they
leave us our right to gas."
When the coalmines went and all railway shares sank
gurgling down the sink,
When steel kings saw the precipice and hovered on
the brink,
The Back Bench Right Wing tore its hair, as the Front
Bench took to drink;
And Churchill he shook his head and sighed: "Who
said these Reds were pink?
Their acts have sunk all enterprise in a bottomless
crevasse;
But I don't much care what the Socialists do, if they
leave us our right to gas."
ALLAN M. LAING

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UNIVERSITY of London. Applics. invited for post of Tutor and Adviser on Practical Work for External Diploma in Social Studies. Appointment initially for two years. Salary £600 p.a. Applicants should possess a Diploma in Social Science or equiv. qualific., and should have had wide exp. of practical work. Further partics. from Secy. to the Senate, Univ. of London, Senate House, W.C.1.

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